This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

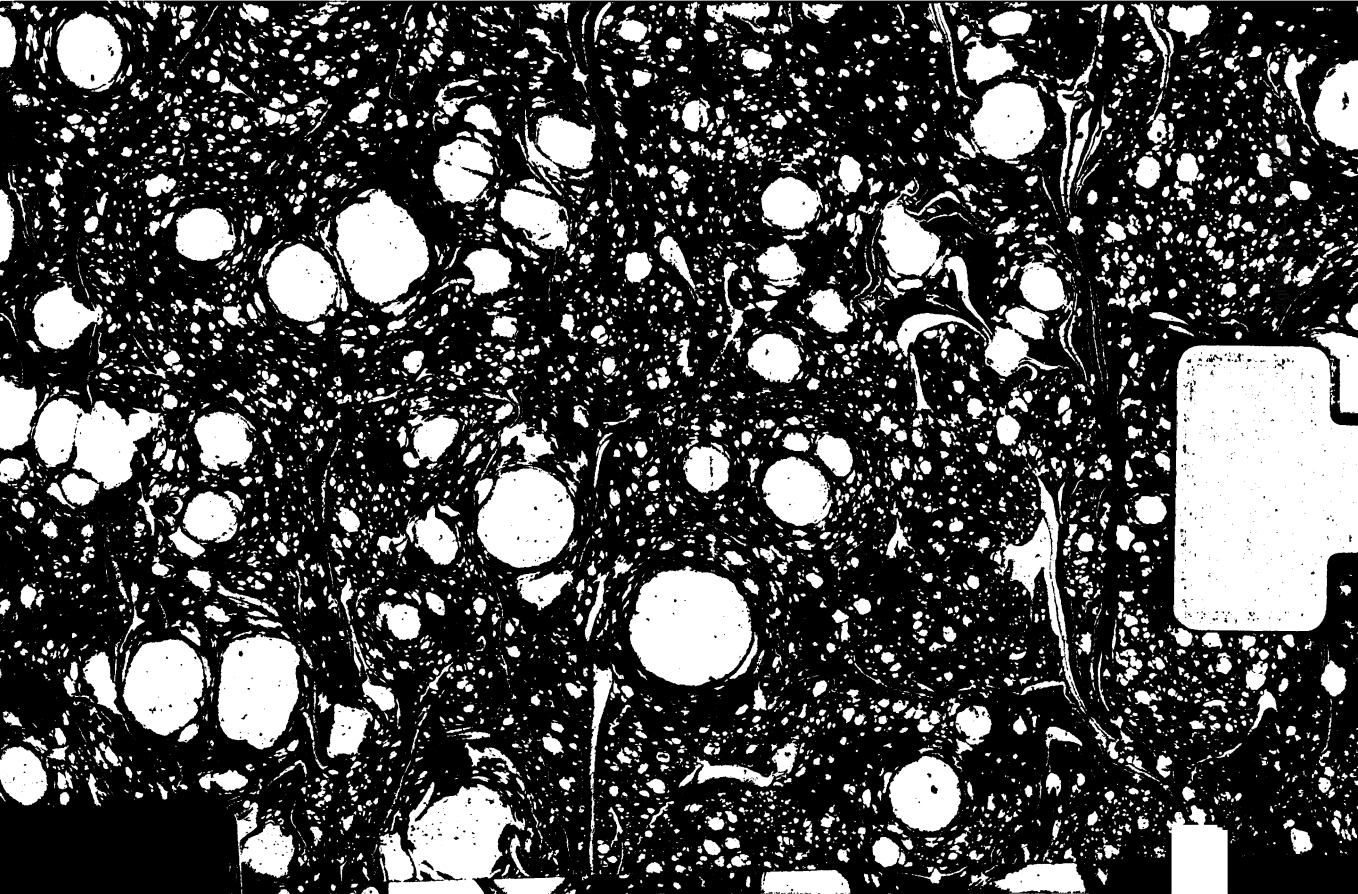
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



2649 c. 249

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GOLDSMITH'S WORKS.

VOL. III.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Painted by T. Creswick *Engraved by J. H. Kenbrade*

ARDAGH.

IN THE COUNTY OF LONGFORD.

Digitized by Google

THE

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

INCLUDING

A VARIETY OF PIECES

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

BY

JAMES PRIOR,

Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Member of the Royal Irish Academy;
Author of the Life of Goldsmith, Burke, etc.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW-YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM & COMPANY, 10 ... STREET.
1853.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

INCLUDING

A VARIETY OF PIECES

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

BY

JAMES PRIOR,

Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; Member of the Royal Irish Academy;
Author of the Life of Goldsmith, Life of Burke, etc. etc.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW-YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM & COMPANY, 10 PARK PLACE.
1853.

Digitized by Google

NEW-YORK:
OHN F. TROW, PRINTER AND STEREOTYPER,
XLIX AND LI ANN-STREET

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

OF THE

THIRD VOLUME.

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

The Description of the Family of Wakefield, in which a kindred likeness prevails, as well of minds as of persons 17

CHAPTER II.

Family misfortunes. The loss of fortune only serves to increase the pride of the worthy 21

CHAPTER III.

A migration. The fortunate circumstances of our lives are generally found at last to be of our own procuring 26

CHAPTER IV.

A proof that even the humblest fortune may grant happiness, which depends not on circumstances, but constitution 32

CHAPTER V.

A new and great acquaintance introduced. What we place most hopes upon, general proves most fatal 37

CHAPTER VI.

The happiness of a country fireside 41

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE.

A town wit described. The dullest fellows may learn to be comical for a night or two 45

CHAPTER VIII.

An amour which promises little good fortune, yet may be productive of much 49

CHAPTER IX.

Two ladies of great distinction introduced. Superior finery ever seems to confer superior breeding 58

CHAPTER X.

The family endeavors to cope with their betters. The miseries of the poor when they attempt to appear above their circumstances 61

CHAPTER XI.

The family still resolve to hold up their heads 66

CHAPTER XII.

Fortune seems resolved to humble the family of Wakefield. Mortifications are often more painful than real calamities . . 71

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Burchell is found to be an enemy; for he has the confidence to give disagreeable advice 76

CHAPTER XIV.

Fresh mortifications, or a demonstration that seeming calamities may be real blessings 80

CHAPTER XV.

All Mr. Burchell's villainy at once detected. The folly of being over-wise 86

CHAPTER XVI.

The family use art, which is opposed with still greater . . 91

CHAPTER XVII.

Scarcely any virtue found to resist the power of long and pleasing temptation 96

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAGE.

The pursuit of a father to reclaim a lost child to virtue . . . 105

CHAPTER XIX.

The description of a person discontented with the present government, and apprehensive of the loss of our liberties 109

CHAPTER XX.

The history of a philosophic vagabond, pursuing novelty but losing content 117

CHAPTER XXI.

The short continuance of friendship amongst the vicious, which is coeval only with mutual satisfaction 132

CHAPTER XXII.

Offences are easily pardoned where there is love at bottom . . 141

CHAPTER XXIII.

None but the guilty can be long and completely miserable . . 145

CHAPTER XXIV.

Fresh calamities 149

CHAPTER XXV.

No situation however wretched it seems, but has some sort of comfort attending it 154

CHAPTER XXVI.

A reformation in the jail. To make laws complete they should reward as well as punish. 159

CHAPTER XXVII.

The same subject continued 164

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Happiness and misery rather the result of prudence than of virtue in this life. Temporal evils or felicities being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themselves trifling, and unworthy its care in the distribution 168

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX.

PAGE.

The equal dealings of Providence demonstrated with regard to the happy and the miserable here below. That from the nature of pleasure and pain, the wretched must be repaid the balance of their sufferings in the life hereafter 179

CHAPTER XXX.

Happier prospects begin to appear. Let us be inflexible, and Nature will at last change in our favor 183

CHAPTER XXXI.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected interest . . 191

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Conclusion 206

BIOGRAPHIES.

MEMOIRS OF M. DE VOLTAIRE. [Now first collected.] . 215

THE LIFE OF RICHARD NASH, of Bath, Esq., extracted principally from Original Papers. [Now first collected.] 265

THE LIFE OF THOMAS PARNELL, D. D., ARCHDEACON OF CLOGHER . 373

THE LIFE OF HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE . 399

MISCELLANEOUS CRITICISM.

(Now first collected.)

I. Smollett's History of England 449

II. Charlevoix's History of Paraguay 456

III. Voltaire's Universal History 463

IV. Hanway's Eight Days' Journey 477

V. Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon 483

VI. Forney's Philosophical Miscellanies 485

VII. Van Egmont's Travels into Asia 490

VIII. Guicciardini's History of Italy 493

IX. Montesquieu's Miscellaneous Pieces 502

X. Jemima and Louisa 504

XI. Hawkins's Miscellanies 506

Digitized by Google

THE

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD;

A TALE.

*Sperate miseri, cavete felices.**

* [Let the wretched live in hope, and the happy be on their guard.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

["The Vicar of Wakefield" was published in March, 1766 Towards the end of May a second edition was called for, and the third appeared on the 25th of August. The work immediately secured friends among every description of readers, and has long been considered one of the most interesting Tales in our language. From the numerous testimonials which have been borne by distinguished writers to its extraordinary merits we select the following:—

Mrs. Barbauld.

"One of the most pleasing novels of a modern cast is 'The Vicar of Wakefield.' It is on this work that the author's talent for humor most successfully displays itself. Many of the incidents are irresistibly comic. Such are the gravity and self-importance of Moses when he produces his bargain of spectacles with silver rims; the expedition to church upon Blackberry and Dobbin; the family picture which was too large to enter the doors; the slyness of the Vicar in overturning the cosmetic, while he pretended to stir the fire; and the schemes and plottings of good notable Mrs. Primrose with her gooseberry wine. We are at once touched and diverted with the harmless vanities of the whole group, joined with innocence and benevolence. The character of the Vicar somewhat resembles Parson Adams, and perhaps still more, the author's village pastor,—'A man to all the country dear!' His kind feelings towards his family, the affecting tenderness with which he receives again his repentant daughter, his hospitality and flowing benevolence, with his behavior in every scene of distress, make him a pleasing and venerable character, and are evidently painted by a man, who strongly felt the enthusiasm of virtue and piety."—*British Novelists*, vol. xxiii.

Sir Walter Scott.

"Whatever defects occur in the tenor of the story, the admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make 'The Vicar of Wakefield' one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed. The principal character, that of the simple pastor himself, with

Digitized by Google

all the worth and excellency which ought to distinguish the ambassador of God to man, and yet with just so much of pedantry and literary vanity as serves to show that he is made of mortal mould, and subject to human failings, is one of the best and most pleasing pictures ever designed. It is, perhaps, impossible to place frail humanity before us in an attitude of more simple dignity than the Vicar, in his character of pastor, of parent, and of husband. His excellent helpmate, with all her motherly cunning and housewifery prudence, loving and respecting her husband, but counterplotting his wisest schemes, at the dictates of maternal vanity, forms an excellent counterpart. Both, with their children around them, their quiet labor and domestic happiness, compose a fireside picture of such a perfect kind, as perhaps is nowhere else equalled. It is sketched indeed from common life, and is a strong contrast to the exaggerated and extraordinary characters and incidents which are the resource of those authors, who, like Bayes, make it their business to elevate and surprise; but the very simplicity of this charming book renders the pleasure it affords more permanent. We read 'The Vicar of Wakefield' in youth and in age,—we return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature. Whether we choose the pathetic and distressing incidents of the fire, the scenes at the jail, or the lighter and humorous parts of the story, we find the best and truest sentiments enforced in the most beautiful language; and perhaps few characters of purer dignity have been described than that of the excellent pastor, rising above sorrow and oppression, and laboring for the conversion of those felons, into whose company he had been thrust by his villainous creditor. In too many works of this class, the critics must apologize for, or censure particular passages in the narrative, as unfit to be perused by youth and innocence. But the wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors. We close his volume with a sigh that such an author should have written so little from the stores of his own genius, and that he should have been so prematurely removed from the sphere of literature, which he so highly adorned."—*Prose Works*, vol. iii. p. 258, edit. 1834.

Washington Irving.

"There are few writers for whom the reader feels such personal kindness as for Oliver Goldsmith. The fascinating ease and simplicity of his style; the

Digitized by Google

benevolence that beams through every page; the whimsical yet amiable views of human life and human nature; the mellow unforced humor, blended so happily with good feeling and good sense, throughout his writings, win their way irresistibly to the affections, and carry the author with them. While writers of greater pretensions and more sounding names are suffered to lie upon our shelves, the works of Goldsmith are cherished and laid in our bosoms. We do not quote them with ostentation, but they mingle with our minds; they sweeten our tempers and harmonize our thoughts; they put us in good humor with ourselves and with the world; and in doing so they make us happier and better men.

"The irresistible charm this novel possesses, evinces how much may be done without the aid of extravagant incident, to excite the imagination and interest the feelings. Few productions of the kind afford greater amusement in the perusal, and still fewer inculcate more impressive lessons of morality. Though wit and humor abound in every page, yet in the whole volume there is not one thought injurious in its tendency, nor one sentiment that can offend the chastest ear. Its language, in the words of an elegant writer, is what 'angels might have heard and virgins told.' In the delineation of his characters, in the conduct of his fable, and in the moral of the piece, the genius of the author is equally conspicuous. The hero displays with unaffected simplicity the most striking virtues that can adorn social life; sincere in his professions, humane and generous in his disposition, he is himself a pattern of the character he represents. The other personages are drawn with similar discrimination. Each is distinguished by some peculiar feature; and the general grouping of the whole has this particular excellence, that not one could be wanted without injuring the unity and beauty of the design. The drama of the tale is also managed with equal skill and effect. There are no extravagant incidents, and no forced or improbable situations; one event rises out of another in the same easy and natural manner as flows the language of the narration; the interest never flags, and is kept up to the last by the expedient of concealing the real character of Burchell. But it is the moral of the work which entitles the author to the praise of supereminent merit in this species of writing. No writer has arrived more successfully at the great ends of a moralist. By the finest examples he inculcates the practice of benevolence, patience in suffering, and reliance on the providence of God."

Digitized by Google

Goethe.

"I found Herder's conversation very useful in making me acquainted with the most modern compositions. Among these productions he pointed out 'The Vicar of Wakefield' as an excellent work.

"A protestant clergyman is perhaps the finest subject for a modern Idyl that can be found. He appears, like Melchizedec, to combine the characters of priest and king. Devoted to agriculture, the most innocent of all terrestrial conditions of man, he is almost always engaged in the same occupations, and confined to the circle of his family connections. He is a father, a master, and a cultivator; and by the union of these characters, a true member of society. On these worldly, but pure and noble foundations, his higher vocations rest. To him belongs the privilege of guiding men in the path of life, of conferring his spiritual education, of sanctifying all the remarkable periods of his existence, of instructing, fortifying, and consoling him; and when the consolations of his present state become insufficient, of revealing to him the hopes of a more favorable hereafter. Let us imagine such a man, animated by the purified sentiments of humanity, strong enough not to sink under the pressure of any event, and thus rising above the crowd, of whom neither purity nor firmness can be expected; let us ascribe to him the qualities necessary for his functions, perfect serenity, indefatigable activity, characterized by the anxious wish not to lose a moment of doing good,—and we shall have the model of a good pastor.

"Add to this the necessity not only of living within a narrow circle, but of passing occasionally into a circle still inferior. Let us endow him with good-humor, a forgiving temper, constancy, and all the qualities that distinguish a decided character. Let him also possess excessive indulgence, and a degree of patience in enduring the faults of others which affects the heart and yet provokes laughter; and we have a perfect representation of our excellent pastor of Wakefield.

"The picture of this character in the course of the pleasures and pains of life, the still increasing interest of the fable, by the union of what is natural with what is uncommon and singular, make this romance one of the best that has ever been written. It has likewise the great advantage of being completely moral, and even Christian, in the purest sense; for it represents probity rewarded, and perseverance in virtue strengthened by perfect confidence in

Digitized by Google

God. It confirms belief in the final triumph of good over evil; and all without any tincture of bigotry or pedantry. The antipathy of the author to these two vices appears from time to time in ironical passages full of sense and humor. Goldsmith unquestionably penetrated deep into the beauties as well as the deformities of the moral world; but he is also much indebted to his English birth, and to the opportunities afforded him by the manners of his nation. The family he has chosen for the subject of his descriptions is one of the inferior degrees of civil life, and is nevertheless in contact with the great. In all its poverty, it still increases, it remains connected with the wealthy. Its little bark floats amidst the stormy billows of social life in England, sometimes aided and sometimes ill-used by the immense fleet which navigates around it. —*Life*, p. 322.

Goëthe, toward the conclusion of a long life, found the judgment of his youth strengthened by experience, and, in 1830, thus writes to his friend Zelter:—

"Why I mention this respected name (Dr. Primrose) just at this place, and symbolize my own situation by the picture of his family, I must shortly explain. Within these few days 'The Vicar of Wakefield' fell accidentally into my hands; I could not help reading the little book again from beginning to end,—not a little affected by the lively recollection how much I had been indebted to the author seventy years ago. It is not to be described the effect which Goldsmith had upon me just at the decisive moment of mental development. That lofty and benevolent irony—that fair and indulgent view of all oversights—that meekness under all calamities—that equanimity under all changes and chances—and all that train of kindred virtues whatever names they bear, formed my best education; and in the end these are the thoughts and feelings which have reclaimed us from all the errors of life."

In speaking of Schlegel's "Lectures on the History of Literature," Lord Byron, in his Diary for 1821, says—"I have found out where the German is right—it is about the Vicar of Wakefield: '*Of all romances in miniature* (*and perhaps this is the best shape in which romance can appear*), *the Vicar of Wakefield is, I think, the most exquisite.*' He thinks!—he might be sure." The

Digitized by Google

Tale is, perhaps, the most popular of English books on the continent of Europe. In France they enumerate seven different translations, which have passed through innumerable editions; in Germany it is little less popular; in Italy it is also familiarly known; and in these countries, as well as in the north of Europe, it is the first English book put into the hands of such as are learning our language.]

Digitized by Google

There are a hundred faults in this thing, and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity. The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters on earth: he is a priest, a husbandman, and the father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach and ready to obey; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement, whom can such a character please? Such as are fond of high life, will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fireside. Such as mistake ribaldry for humor, will find no wit in his harmless conversation; and such as have been taught to deride religion, will laugh at one, whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMILY OF WAKEFIELD, IN WHICH A KINDRED LIKENESS PREVAILS, AS WELL OF MINDS AS OF PERSONS.

I was ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family, did more service than he who continued single and only talked of population. From this motive, I had scarcely taken orders a year, before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife, as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving, and cookery, none could excel her. She prided herself also upon being an excellent contriver in housekeeping; though I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. There was, in fact, nothing that could make us angry with the world or each other. We had an elegant house, situated in a fine country, and a good neighborhood.

Digitized by Google

The year was spent in moral or rural amusements; in visiting our rich neighbors, and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo; all our adventures were by the fireside, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.

As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us to taste our gooseberry-wine, for which we had great reputation; and I profess with the veracity of a historian, that I never knew one of them find fault with it. Our cousins, too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honor by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number. However, my wife always insisted that as they were the same *flesh and blood*, they should sit with us at the same table. So that if we had not very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us; for this remark will hold good through life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated: and as some men gaze with admiration at the colors of a tulip, or the wing of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house, I ever took care to lend him a riding coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them. By this the house was cleared of such as we did not like; but never was the family of WAKEFIELD known to turn the traveller or the poor dependent out of doors.

Thus we lived several years in a state of much happiness, not but that we sometimes had those little rubs which Providence sends to enhance the value of its favors. My orchard was often

Digitized by Google

robbed by schoolboys, and my wife's custards plundered by the cats or the children. The 'Squire would sometimes fall asleep in the most pathetic parts of my sermon, or his lady return my wife's civilities at church with a mutilated courtesy. But we soon got over the uneasiness caused by such accidents, and usually in three or four days began to wonder how they vexed us.

My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well formed and healthy; my sons hardy and active, my daughters beautiful and blooming. When I stood in the midst of the little circle, which promised to be the supports of my declining age, I could not avoid repeating the famous story of Count Abensberg, who, in Henry the Second's progress through Germany, while other courtiers came with their treasures, brought his thirty-two children, and presented them to his sovereign as the most valuable offering he had to bestow. In this manner, though I had but six, I considered them as a very valuable present made to my country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor. Our eldest son was named GEORGE, after his uncle, who left us ten thousand pounds. Our second child, a girl, I intended to call after her aunt Grissel; but my wife, who during her pregnancy had been reading romances, insisted upon her being called OLIVIA. In less than another year we had another daughter, and now I was determined that Grissel should be her name; but a rich relation taking a fancy to stand godmother, the girl was, by her directions, called SOPHIA: so that we had two romantic names in the family; but I solemnly protest I had no hand in it. MOSES was our next, and after an interval of twelve years, we had two sons more.

It would be fruitless to deny exultation when I saw my little ones about me; but the vanity and the satisfaction of my wife

Digitized by Google

were even greater than mine. When our visitors would say, "Well, upon my word, Mrs. Primrose, you have the finest children in the whole country:"—"Ay, neighbor," she would answer, "they are as heaven made them, handsome enough, if they be good enough; for handsome is that handsome does." And then she would bid the girls hold up their heads; who, to conceal nothing, were certainly very handsome. Mere outside is so very trifling a circumstance with me, that I should scarcely have remembered to mention it, had it not been a general topic of conversation in the country. Olivia, now about eighteen, had that luxuriancy of beauty, with which painters generally draw Hebe; open, sprightly, and commanding. Sophia's features were not so striking at first, but often did more certain execution; for they were soft, modest, and alluring. The one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successfully repeated.

The temper of a woman is generally formed from the turn of her features, at least it was so with my daughters. Olivia wished for many lovers, Sophia to secure one. Olivia was often affected from too great a desire to please. Sophia even repressed excellence from her fears to offend. The one entertained me with her vivacity when I was gay, the other with her sense when I was serious. But these qualities were never carried to excess in either, and I have often seen them exchange characters for a whole day together. A suit of mourning has transformed my coquet into a prude, and a new set of ribands has given her younger sister more than natural vivacity. My eldest son George was bred at Oxford, as I intended him for one of the learned professions. My second boy Moses, whom I designed for business, received a sort of miscellaneous education at home. But it is needless to attempt describing the particular characters of young people that had seen but very little of the world. In short, a family like-

Digitized by Google

ness prevailed through all, and properly speaking, they had but one character, that of being all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive.

CHAPTER II.

FAMILY MISFORTUNES.—THE LOSS OF FORTUNE ONLY SERVES TO INCREASE THE PRIDE OF THE WORTHY.

The temporal concerns of our family were chiefly committed to my wife's management; as to the spiritual, I took them entirely under my own direction. The profits of my living, which amounted to but thirty-five pounds a year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese; for having a fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate, and of being acquainted with every man in the parish, exhorting the married men to temperance, and the bachelors to matrimony; so that in a few years it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants at Wakefield, a parson wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and ale-houses wanting customers.

Matrimony was always one of my favorite topics, and I wrote several sermons to prove its happiness; but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of supporting: for I maintained with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second, or, to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist.

I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have

Digitized by Google

the consolation of thinking were read only by the happy *few*. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but alas! they had not like me made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared. I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.

It was thus perhaps, from hearing marriage so often recommended, that my eldest son, just upon leaving college, fixed his affections upon the daughter of a neighboring clergyman, who was a dignitary in the church, and in circumstances to give her a large fortune: but fortune was her smallest accomplishment. Miss Arabella Wilmot was allowed by all, except my two daughters, to be completely pretty. Her youth, health, and innocence, were still heightened by a complexion so transparent, and such a happy sensibility of look, as even age could not gaze on with indifference. As Mr. Wilmot knew that I could make a very handsome settlement on my son, he was not averse to the match; so both families lived together in all that harmony which generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced by experience that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period; and the various amusements which the young couple every day shared in each other's company, seemed to increase their passion. We were generally awakened in the morning by music, and on fine days

Digitized by Google

rode a hunting. The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study: they usually read a page, and then gazed at themselves in the glass, which even philosophers might own often presented the page of greatest beauty. At dinner my wife took the lead; for as she always insisted upon carving every thing herself, it being her mother's way, she gave us upon these occasions the history of every dish. When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed; and sometimes, with the music-master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country dances, and forfeits shortened the rest of the day, without the assistance of cards, as I hated all manner of gaming, except backgammon, at which my old friend and I sometimes took a two-penny hit. Nor can I here pass over an ominous circumstance that happened the last time we played together: I only wanted to fling a quatre, and yet I threw deuce ace five times running.

Some months were elapsed in this manner, till at last it was thought convenient to fix a day for the nuptials of the young couple, who seemed earnestly to desire it. During the preparations for the wedding, I need not describe the busy importance of my wife, nor the sly looks of my daughters: in fact, my attention was fixed on another object, the completing a tract which I intended shortly to publish in defence of my favorite principle. As I looked upon this as a master-piece, both for argument and style, I could not in the pride of my heart avoid showing it to my old friend Mr. Wilmot, as I made no doubt of receiving his approbation; but not till too late I discovered that he was most violently attached to the contrary opinion, and with good reason; for he was at that time actually courting a fourth wife. This, as may be expected, produced a dispute attended with some acrimony, which threatened to interrupt our intended

Digitized by Google

alliance: but on the day before that appointed for the ceremony, we agreed to discuss the subject at large.

It was managed with proper spirit on both sides: he asserted that I was heterodox, I retorted the charge; he replied, and I rejoined. In the mean time, while the controversy was hottest, I was called out by one of my relations, who, with a face of concern, advised me to give up the dispute, at least till my son's wedding was over. "How," cried I, "relinquish the cause of truth, and let him be a husband, already driven to the very verge of absurdity. You might as well advise me to give up my fortune as my argument." "Your fortune," returned my friend, "I am now sorry to inform you is almost nothing. The merchant in town, in whose hands your money was lodged, has gone off, to avoid a statute of bankruptcy, and is thought not to have left a shilling in the pound. I was unwilling to shock you or the family with the account till after the wedding; but now it may serve to moderate your warmth in the argument; for, I suppose, your own prudence will enforce the necessity of dissembling, at least till your son has the young lady's fortune secure."—— "Well," returned I, "if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles. I'll go this moment and inform the company of my circumstances; and as for the argument, I even here retract my former concessions in the old gentleman's favor, nor will I allow him now to be a husband in any sense of the expression."

It would be endless to describe the different sensations of both families, when I divulged the news of our misfortune; but what others felt was slight to what the lovers appeared to endure. Mr. Wilmot, who seemed before sufficiently inclined to break off the match, was by this blow soon determined: one virtue he had

Digitized by Google

in perfection, which was prudence, too often the only one that is left us at seventy-two.

CHAPTER III.

A MIGRATION.—THE FORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES ARE GENERALLY FOUND AT LAST TO BE OF OUR OWN PROCURING.

The only hope of our family now was, that the report of our misfortune might be malicious or premature: but a letter from my agent in town soon came with a confirmation of every particular. The loss of fortune to myself alone would have been trifling; the only uneasiness I felt was for my family, who were to be humble without an education to render them callous to contempt.

Near a fortnight had passed before I attempted to restrain their affliction; for premature consolation is but the remembrancer of sorrow. During this interval, my thoughts were employed on some future means of supporting them; and at last a small cure of fifteen pounds a-year was offered me in a distant neighborhood, where I could still enjoy my principles without molestation. With this proposal I joyfully closed, having determined to increase my salary by managing a little farm.

Having taken this resolution, my next care was to get together the wrecks of my fortune; and, all debts collected and paid, out of fourteen thousand pounds we had but four hundred remaining. My chief attention, therefore, was now to bring down the pride of my family to their circumstances; for I well knew that aspiring beggary is wretchedness itself. "You cannot be ignorant, my children," cried I, "that no prudence of ours could have prevented our late misfortune; but prudence may do much in disappointing its effects. We are now poor, my fondlings, and

Digitized by Google

wisdom bids us conform to our humble situation. Let us, then, without repining, give up those splendors with which numbers are wretched, and seek in humbler circumstances that peace with which all may be happy. The poor live pleasantly without our help, why then should not we learn to live without theirs? No, my children, let us from this moment give up all pretensions to gentility; we have still enough left for happiness if we are wise, and let us draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune."

As my eldest son was bred a scholar, I determined to send him to town, where his abilities might contribute to our support and his own. The separation of friends and families is, perhaps, one of the most distressful circumstances attendant on penury. The day soon arrived on which we were to disperse for the first time. My son, after taking leave of his mother and the rest, who mingled their tears with their kisses, came to ask a blessing from me. This I gave him from my heart, and which, added to five guineas, was all the patrimony I had now to bestow. "You are going, my boy," cried I, "to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you. Take from me the same horse that was given him by the good bishop Jewel, this staff, and take this book too, it will be your comfort on the way: these two lines in it are worth a million, *I have been young, and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.* Let this be your consolation as you travel on. Go, my boy, whatever be thy fortune, let me see thee once a year; still keep a good heart, and farewell." As he was possessed of integrity and honor, I was under no apprehensions from throwing him naked into the amphitheatre of life; for I knew he would act a good part whether vanquished or victorious.

His departure only prepared the way for our own, which arrived a few days afterwards. The leaving a neighborhood in

Digitized by Google

which we had enjoyed so many hours of tranquillity, was not without a tear, which scarcely fortitude itself could suppress. Besides, a journey of seventy miles to a family that had hitherto never been above ten from home, filled us with apprehension; and the cries of the poor, who followed us for some miles, contributed to increase it. The first day's journey brought us in safety within thirty miles of our future retreat, and we put up for the night at an obscure inn in a village by the way. When we were shown a room, I desired the landlord, in my usual way, to let us have his company, with which he complied, as what he drank would increase the bill next morning. He knew, however, the whole neighborhood to which I was removing, particularly 'Squire THORNHILL, who was to be my landlord, and who lived within a few miles of the place. This gentleman he described as one who desired to know little more of the world than its pleasures, being particularly remarkable for his attachment to the fair sex. He observed that no virtue was able to resist his arts and assiduity, and that scarcely a farmer's daughter within ten miles round, but what had found him successful and faithless. Though this account gave me some pain, it had a very different effect upon my daughters, whose features seemed to brighten with the expectation of an approaching triumph; nor was my wife less pleased and confident of their allurements and virtue. While our thoughts were thus employed, the hostess entered the room to inform her husband, that the strange gentleman, who had been two days in the house, wanted money, and could not satisfy them for his reckoning. "Want money!" replied the host, "that must be impossible; for it was no later than yesterday he paid three guineas to our beadle to spare an old broken soldier that was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing." The hostess, however, still persisting in her first assertion, he was preparing to leave the room, swearing that he would be satisfied

Digitized by Google

one way or another, when I begged the landlord would introduce me to a stranger of so much charity as he described. With this he complied, showing in a gentleman who seemed to be about thirty, dressed in clothes that once were laced. His person was well formed, and his face marked with the lines of thinking. He had something short and dry in his address, and seemed not to understand ceremony, or to despise it. Upon the landlord's leaving the room, I could not avoid expressing my concern to the stranger at seeing a gentleman in such circumstances, and offered him my purse to satisfy the present demand. "I take it with all my heart, sir," replied he, "and am glad that a late oversight in giving what money I had about me, has shown me that there are still some men like you. I must, however, previously entreat being informed of the name and residence of my benefactor, in order to repay him as soon as possible." In this I satisfied him fully, not only mentioning my name and late misfortunes, but the place to which I was going to remove. "This," cried he, "happens still more luckily than I hoped for, as I am going the same way myself, having been detained here two days by the floods, which I hope by to-morrow will be found passable." I testified the pleasure I should have in his company, and my wife and daughters joining in entreaty, he was prevailed upon to stay supper. The stranger's conversation, which was at once pleasing and instructive, induced me to wish for a continuance of it; but it was now high time to retire and take refreshment against the fatigues of the following day.

The next morning we all set forward together: my family on horseback, while Mr. BURCHELL,* our new companion, walked along the footpath by the roadside, observing with a smile, that as we were ill mounted, he would be too generous to attempt

* [One of Goldsmith's relations married a person named Burchell, which may have suggested this name when writing the tale.]

Digitized by Google

leaving us behind. As the floods were not yet subsided, we were obliged to hire a guide, who trotted on before, Mr. Burchell and I bringing up the rear. We lightened the fatigues of the road with philosophical disputes, which he seemed to understand perfectly. But what surprised me most was, that though he was a money-borrower, he defended his opinions with as much obstinacy as if he had been my patron. He now and then also informed me to whom the different seats belonged that lay in our view as we travelled the road. "That," cried he, pointing to a very magnificent house which stood at some distance, "belongs to Mr. Thornhill, a young gentleman who enjoys a large fortune, though entirely dependent on the will of his uncle, Sir William Thornhill, a gentleman who, content with a little himself, permits his nephew to enjoy the rest, and chiefly resides in town." "What!" cried I, "is my young landlord then the nephew of a man whose virtues, generosity, and singularities are so universally known? I have heard Sir William Thornhill represented as one of the most generous, yet whimsical men in the kingdom; a man of consummate benevolence."——"Something, perhaps, too much so," replied Mr. Burchell, "at least he carried benevolence to an excess when young; for his passions were then strong, and as they were all upon the side of virtue, they led it up to a romantic extreme. He early began to aim at the qualifications of the soldier and scholar; was soon distinguished in the army, and had some reputation among men of learning. Adulation ever follows the ambitious; for such alone receive most pleasure from flattery. He was surrounded with crowds, who showed him only one side of their character; so that he began to lose a regard for private interest in universal sympathy. He loved all mankind; for fortune prevented him from knowing that there were rascals. Physicians tell us of a disorder, in which the whole body is so exquisitely sensible, that the slightest touch

Digitized by Google

gives pain; what some have thus suffered in their persons, this gentleman felt in his mind. The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the quick, and his soul labored under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others. Thus disposed to relieve, it will be easily conjectured, he found numbers disposed to solicit: his profusions began to impair his fortune, but not his good-nature; that, indeed, was seen to increase as the other seemed to decay: he grew improvident as he grew poor; and though he talked like a man of sense, his actions were those of a fool. Still, however, being surrounded with importunity, and no longer able to satisfy every request that was made him, instead of *money* he gave *promises*. They were all he had to bestow, and he had not resolution enough to give any man pain by a denial. By this he drew round him crowds of dependents, whom he was sure to disappoint, yet wished to relieve. These hung upon him for a time, and left him with merited reproaches and contempt. But in proportion as he became contemptible to others, he became despicable to himself. His mind had leaned upon their adulation, and that support taken away, he could find no pleasure in the applause of his heart, which he had never learnt to reverence. The world now began to wear a different aspect; the flattery of his friends began to dwindle into simple approbation. Approbation soon took the more friendly form of advice, and advice when rejected produced their reproaches. He now therefore found, that such friends as benefits had gathered round him, were little estimable; he now found that a man's own heart must be ever given to gain that of another. I now found, that——that——I forget what I was going to observe: in short, sir, he resolved to respect himself, and laid down a plan of restoring his falling fortune. For this purpose, in his own whimsical manner, he travelled through Europe on foot, and now, though

Digitized by Google

he has scarcely attained the age of thirty,* his circumstances are more affluent than ever. At present, his bounties are more rational and moderate than before; but still he preserves the character of a humorist, and finds most pleasure in eccentric virtues."

My attention was so much taken up by Mr. Burchell's account, that I scarcely looked forward as he went along, till we were alarmed by the cries of my family, when turning, I perceived my youngest daughter in the midst of a rapid stream, thrown from her horse, and struggling with the torrent. She had sunk twice, nor was it in my power to disengage myself in time to bring her relief. My sensations were even too violent to permit my attempting her rescue: she must have certainly perished had not my companion, perceiving her danger, instantly plunged in to her relief, and, with some difficulty, brought her in safety to the opposite shore. By taking the current a little farther up, the rest of the family got safely over, where we had an opportunity of joining our acknowledgments to hers. Her gratitude may be more readily imagined than described: she thanked her deliverer more with looks than words, and continued to lean upon his arm, as if still willing to receive assistance. My wife also hoped one day to have the pleasure of returning his kindness at her own house. Thus, after we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr. Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave; and we pursued our journey: my wife observing as he went, that she liked him extremely, and protesting, that if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon. I

* [Allusions which recall the time, place, and manner of some of Goldsmith's own adventures.]

Digitized by Google

could not but smile to hear her talk in this lofty strain;* but I was never much displeased with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.

CHAPTER IV.

A PROOF THAT EVEN THE HUMBLEST FORTUNE MAY GRANT HAPPINESS, WHICH DEPENDS NOT ON CIRCUMSTANCES BUT CONSTITUTION.

The place of our retreat was in a little neighborhood, consisting of farmers, who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. As they had almost all the conveniences of life within themselves, they seldom visited towns or cities, in search of superfluity. Remote from the polite, they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners; and frugal by habit, they scarcely knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with cheerfulness on days of labor; but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true-love knots on Valentine morning, eat pancakes on Shrove-tide, showed their wit on the first of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas eve. Being apprized of our approach, the whole neighborhood came out to meet their minister, dressed in their finest clothes, and preceded by a pipe and tabor: a feast also was provided for our reception, at which we sat cheerfully down; and what the conversation wanted in wit, was made up in laughter.

Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before: on one side a meadow, on the other a green. My

* [" One almost at the verge of beggary, thus to assume language of the most insulting affluence, might excite the ridicule of ill-nature; but I was never" &c.—*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, having given a hundred pound for my predecessor's good-will. Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little inclosures; the elms and hedge-rows appearing with inexpressible beauty. My house consisted of but one story, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely whitewashed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlor and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. Besides, as it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture. There were three other apartments, one for my wife and me, another for our two daughters, within our own, and the third, with two beds, for the rest of the children.

The little republic to which I gave laws, was regulated in the following manner; by sunrise we all assembled in our common apartment; the fire being previously kindled by the servant. After we had saluted each other with proper ceremony, for I always thought fit to keep up some mechanical forms of good breeding, without which freedom ever destroys friendship, we all bent in gratitude to that Being who gave us another day. This duty being performed, my son and I went to pursue our usual industry abroad, while my wife and daughters employed themselves in providing breakfast, which was always ready at a certain time. I allowed half an hour for this meal, and an hour for dinner; which time was taken up in innocent mirth between my wife and daughters, and in philosophical arguments between my son and me.

As we rose with the sun, so we never pursued our labors after it was gone down, but returned home to the expecting family; where smiling looks, a neat hearth, and pleasant fire were prepared

Digitized by Google

ed for our reception. Nor were we without guests; sometimes farmer Flamborough, our talkative neighbor, and often the blind piper, would pay us a visit, and taste our gooseberry wine; for the making of which we had lost neither the receipt nor the reputation. These harmless people had several ways of being good company; while one played, the other would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's last good night, or the cruelty of Barbara Allen. The night was concluded in the manner we began the morning, my youngest boys being appointed to read the lessons of the day, and he that read loudest, distinctest, and best, was to have a halfpenny on Sunday to put in the poor's box.

When Sunday came, it was indeed a day of finery, which all my sumptuary edicts could not restrain. How well soever I fancied my lectures against pride had conquered the vanity of my daughters, yet I found them still secretly attached to all their former finery: they still loved laces, ribands, bugles, and catgut; my wife herself retained a passion for her crimson paduasoy, because I formerly happened to say it became her.

The first Sunday in particular their behavior served to mortify me: I had desired my girls the preceding night to be dressed early the next day; for I always loved to be at church a good while before the rest of the congregation. They punctually obeyed my directions; but when we were to assemble in the morning at breakfast, down came my wife and daughters, dressed out all in their former splendor; their hair plastered up with pomatum, their faces patched to taste, their trains bundled up in a heap behind, and rustling at every motion. I could not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion. In this exigence, therefore, my only resource was to order my son, with an important air, to call our coach. The girls were amazed at the command; but I repeated it with more solemnity than before.—"Surely, my dear, you jest,"

Digitized by Google

cried my wife, "we can walk it perfectly well: we want no coach to carry us now." "You mistake, child," returned I, "we do want a coach; for if we walk to church in this trim, the very children in the parish will hoot after us."—"Indeed," replied my wife, "I always imagined that my Charles was fond of seeing his children neat and handsome about him."—"You may be as neat as you please," interrupted I, "and I shall love you the better for it; but all this is not neatness, but frippery. These rufflings, and pinkings, and patchings, will only make us hated by all the wives of our neighbors. No, my children," continued I, more gravely, "these gowns may be altered into something of a plainer cut; for finery is very unbecoming in us, who want the means of decency. I do not know whether such flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world may be clothed from the trimmings of the vain."

This remonstrance had the proper effect; they went with great composure, that very instant, to change their dress; and the next day I had the satisfaction of finding my daughters, at their own request, employed in cutting up their trains into Sunday waistcoats for Dick and Bill, the two little ones, and what was still more satisfactory, the gowns seemed improved by this curtailing.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW AND GREAT ACQUAINTANCE INTRODUCED.—WHAT WE PLACE MOST HOPES UPON, GENERALLY PROVES MOST FATAL.

At a small distance from the house, my predecessor had made a seat, overshaded by a hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine and our labor soon finished, we

Digitized by Google

usually sat together, to enjoy an extensive landscape, in the calm of the evening. Here, too, we drank tea, which was now become an occasional banquet: and as we had it but seldom, it diffused a new joy, the preparations for it being made with no small share of bustle and ceremony. On these occasions our two little ones always read to us, and they were regularly served after we had done. Sometimes, to give a variety to our amusements, the girls sung to the guitar; and while they thus formed a little concert, my wife and I would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with blue-bells and centaury, talk of our children with rapture, and enjoy the breeze that wafted both health and harmony.

In this manner we began to find that every situation in life might bring its own peculiar pleasures: every morning waked us to a repetition of toil; but the evening repaid it with vacant hilarity.

It was about the beginning of autumn, on a holiday, for I kept such as intervals of relaxation from labor, that I had drawn out my family to our usual place of amusement, and our young musicians began their usual concert. As we were thus engaged, we saw a stag bound nimbly by, within about twenty paces of where we were sitting, and by its panting it seemed pressed by the hunters. We had not much time to reflect upon the poor animal's distress, when we perceived the dogs and horsemen come sweeping along at some distance behind, and making the very path it had taken. I was instantly for returning in with my family; but either curiosity or surprise, or some more hidden motive, held my wife and daughters to their seats. The huntsman, who rode foremost, passed us with great swiftness, followed by four or five persons more, who seemed in equal haste. At last, a young gentleman of a more genteel appearance than the rest came forward, and for a while regarding us, instead of pur

Digitized by Google

suing the chase, stopped short, and giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless superior air. He seemed to want no introduction, but was going to salute my daughters as one certain of a kind reception; but they had early learned the lesson of looking presumption out of countenance. Upon which he let us know his name was Thornhill, and that he was owner of the estate that lay for some extent round us. He again, therefore, offered to salute the female part of the family, and such was the power of fortune and fine clothes, that he found no second repulse. As his address, though confident, was easy, we soon became more familiar; and perceiving musical instruments lying near, he begged to be favored with a song. As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintances, I winked upon my daughters in order to prevent their compliance; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother; so that with a cheerful air, they gave us a favorite song of Dryden's. Mr. Thornhill seemed highly delighted with their performance and choice, and then took up the guitar himself. He played but very indifferently; however, my eldest daughter repaid his former applause with interest, and assured him that his tones were louder than even those of her master. At this compliment he bowed, which she returned with a courtesy. He praised her taste, and she commended his understanding: an age could not have made them better acquainted: while the fond mother, too, equally happy, insisted upon her landlord's stepping in, and tasting a glass of her gooseberry. The whole family seemed earnest to please him: my girls attempted to entertain him with topics they thought most modern, while Moses, on the contrary, gave him a question or two from the ancients, for which he had the satisfaction of being laughed at:* my little ones were no less busy, and

* ["For he always ascribed to his wit that laughter which was lavished at his simplicity."—*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

fondly stuck close to the stranger. All my endeavors could scarcely keep their dirty fingers from handling and tarnishing the lace on his clothes, and lifting up the flaps of his pocket-holes, to see what was there. At the approach of evening he took leave; but not till he had requested permission to renew his visit, which, as he was our landlord, we most readily agreed to.

As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion, that it was a most fortunate hit; for that she had known even stranger things at last brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them; and concluded, she protested she could see no reason why the two Miss Wrinkles should marry great fortunes, and her children get none. As this last argument was directed to me, I protested I could see no reason for it neither, nor why Mr. Simkins got the ten thousand pound prize in the lottery, and we set down with a blank.* "I protest, Charles," cried my wife, "this is the way you always damp my girls and me when we are in spirits. Tell me, Sophy, my dear, what do you think of our new visitor? Don't you think he seemed to be good-natured?"—"Immensely so, indeed, mamma," replied she. "I think he has a great deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say."—"Yes," cried Olivia, "he is well enough for a man; but for my part, I don't much like him, he is so extremely impudent and familiar; but on the guitar he is shocking." These two last speeches I interpreted by contraries. I found by this, that Sophia internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him.—"Whatever may be your opinions of him, my children," cried I, "to confess the truth, he has not

* ["But those," added I, "who either aim at husbands greater than themselves, or at the ten thousand pound prize, have been fools for their ridiculous claims, whether successful or not."—*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

prepossessed me in his favor. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust; and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us. Let us keep to companions of our own rank. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune-hunter; and I can see no reason why fortune-hunting women should not be contemptible too. Thus, at best, we shall be contemptible if his views be honorable; but if they be otherwise! I should shudder but to think of that! It is true I have no apprehensions from the conduct of my children, but I think there are some from his character."—I would have proceeded, but for the interruption of a servant from the 'Squire, who, with his compliments, sent us a side of venison, and a promise to dine with us some days after. This well-timed present pleaded more powerfully in his favor, than any thing I had to say could obviate. I therefore continued silent, satisfied with just having pointed out danger, and leaving it to their own discretion to avoid it. That virtue which requires to be ever guarded, is scarcely worth the sentinel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPINESS OF A COUNTRY FIRESIDE.

As we carried on the former dispute with some degree of warmth, in order to accommodate matters, it was universally agreed, that we should have a part of the venison for supper, and the girls undertook the task with alacrity. "I am sorry," cried I, "that we have no neighbor or stranger to take a part in this good cheer: feasts of this kind acquire a double relish from hospitality." —"Bless me," cried my wife," "here comes our good friend, Mr. Burchell, that saved our Sophia, and that run you down fairly

Digitized by Google

in the argument."—"Confute me in argument, child!" cried I. "You mistake there, my dear, I believe there are but few that can do that; I never dispute your abilities at making a goose-pie, and I beg you'll leave argument to me."—As I spoke, poor Mr. Burchell entered the house, and was welcomed by the family, who shook him heartily by the hand, while little Dick officiously reached him a chair.

I was pleased with the poor man's friendship for two reasons: because I knew that he wanted mine, and I knew him to be friendly as far as he was able. He was known in our neighborhood by the character of the poor gentleman that would do no good when he was young, though he was not yet thirty. He would at intervals talk with great good sense; but in general he was fondest of the company of children, whom he used to call harmless little men. He was famous, I found, for singing them ballads, and telling them stories; and seldom went out without something in his pockets for them; a piece of gingerbread, or a halfpenny whistle. He generally came for a few days into our neighborhood once a year, and lived upon the neighbors' hospitality. He sat down to supper among us, and my wife was not sparing of her gooseberry wine. The tale went round; he sung us old songs, and gave the children the story of the Buck of Beverland, with the history of Patient Grissel, the adventures of Catskin, and then Fair Rosamond's Bower. Our cock, which always crew at eleven, now told us it was time for repose; but an unforeseen difficulty started about lodging the stranger—all our beds were already taken up, and it was too late to send him to the next alehouse. In this dilemma, little Dick offered him his part of the bed, if his brother Moses would let him lie with him; "and I," cried Bill, "will give Mr. Burchell my part, if my sisters will take me to theirs."—"Well done, my good children," cried I, "hospitality is one of the first Christian duties. The

Digitized by Google

beast retires to its shelter, and the bird flies to its nest; but helpless man can only find refuge from his fellow-creature. The greatest stranger in this world, was he that came to save it. He never had a house, as if willing to see what hospitality was left remaining amongst us. Deborah, my dear," cried I, to my wife "give those boys a lump of sugar each, and let Dick's be the largest, because he spoke first."

In the morning early I called out my whole family to help at saving an after-growth of hay, and our guest offering his assistance, he was accepted among the number. Our labors went on lightly; we turned the swath to the wind. I went foremost, and the rest followed in due succession. I could not avoid, however, observing the assiduity of Mr. Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the task. When he had finished his own, he would join in hers, and enter into a close conversation: but I had too good an opinion of Sophia's understanding, and was too well convinced of her ambition, to be under any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune. When we were finished for the day, Mr. Burchell was invited as on the night before; but he refused, as he was to lie that night at a neighbor's, to whose child he was carrying a whistle. When gone, our conversation at supper turned upon our late unfortunate guest. "What a strong instance," said I, "is that poor man of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance. He by no means wants sense, which only serves to aggravate his former folly. Poor forlorn creature, where are now the revellers, the flatterers, that he could once inspire and command! Gone, perhaps, to attend the bagnio pander, grown rich by his extravagance. They once praised him, and now they applaud the pander: their former raptures at his wit are now converted into sarcasms at his folly: he is poor, and perhaps deserves poverty: for he has neither the ambition to be independent, nor the skill to be useful." Prompted perhaps by

Digitized by Google

some secret reasons, I delivered this observation with too much acrimony, which my Sophia gently reproved. "Whatsoever his former conduct may have been, papa, his circumstances should exempt him from censure now. His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly; and I have heard my papa himself say, that we should never strike an unnecessary blow at a victim over whom Providence holds the scourge of its resentment."—"You are right, Sophy," cried my son Moses, "and one of the ancients finely represents so malicious a conduct, by the attempts of a rustic to flay Marsyas, whose skin, the fable tells us, had been wholly stripped off by another. Besides, I don't know if this poor man's situation be so bad as my father would represent it. We are not to judge of the feelings of others by what we might feel in their place. However dark the habitation of the mole to our eyes, yet the animal itself finds the apartment sufficiently lightsome. And to confess a truth, this man's mind seems fitted to his station: for I never heard any one more sprightly than he was to-day, when he conversed with you."—This was said without the least design; however, it excited a blush, which she strove to cover by an affected laugh, assuring him, that she scarcely took any notice of what he said to her; but that she believed he might once have been a very fine gentleman. The readiness with which she undertook to vindicate herself, and her blushing, were symptoms I did not internally approve; but I repressed my suspicions.

As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison pasty; Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones: my daughters seemed equally busy with the rest; and I observed them for a good while cooking something over the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother; but little Dick informed me in a whisper, that they were making a *wash* for the face. Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy

Digitized by Google

to; for I knew that instead of mending the complexion they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another.

CHAPTER VII.

A TOWN WIT DESCRIBED.—THE DULLEST FELLOWS MAY LEARN TO BE COMICAL FOR A NIGHT OR TWO.

When the morning arrived on which we were to entertain our young landlord, it may be easily supposed what provisions were exhausted to make an appearance. It may also be conjectured that my wife and daughters expanded their gayest plumage upon this occasion. Mr. Thornhill came with a couple of friends, his chaplain and feeder. The servants, who were numerous, he politely ordered to the next alehouse: but my wife, in the triumph of heart, insisted on entertaining them all; for which, by the by, our family was pinched for three weeks after. As Mr. Burchell had hinted to us the day before, that he was making some proposals of marriage to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception: but accident in some measure relieved our embarrassment; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr. Thornhill observed with an oath, that he never knew any thing more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty: "For strike me ugly," continued he, "if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock of St. Dunstan's." At this he laughed, and so did we:—the jests of the rich are ever successful. Olivia, too, could not avoid whispering loud enough to be heard, that he had an infinite fund of humor.

Digitized by Google

After dinner, I began with my usual toast, the Church; for this I was thanked by the chaplain, as he said the Church was the only mistress of his affections.—"Come tell us honestly, Frank," said the 'Squire, with his usual archness, "suppose the Church, your present mistress, dressed in lawn sleeves, on one hand, and Miss Sophia, with no lawn about her, on the other, which would you be for?" "For both, to be sure," cried the chaplain.—"Right, Frank," cried the 'Squire, "for may this glass suffocate me, but a fine girl is worth all the priestcraft in the creation. For what are tithes and tricks but an imposition, all a confounded imposture, and I can prove it."—"I wish you would," cried my son Moses, "and I think," continued he, "that I should be able to answer you."—"Very well, sir," cried the 'Squire, who immediately smoked him, and winking on the rest of the company to prepare us for the sport, "if you are for a cool argument upon that subject, I am ready to accept the challenge. And first, whether are you for managing it analogically, or dialogically?" "I am for managing it rationally," cried Moses, quite happy at being permitted to dispute. "Good again," cried the 'Squire, "and firstly, of the first, I hope you'll not deny that whatever is, is. If you don't grant me that, I can go no further."—"Why," returned Moses, "I think I may grant that, and make the best of it."—"I hope too," returned the other, "you'll grant, that a part is less than the whole." "I grant that too," cried Moses, "it is but just and reasonable."—"I hope," cried the 'Squire, "you will not deny, that the two angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones."—"Nothing can be plainer," returned t'other, and looked round with his usual importance—"Very well," cried the 'Squire, speaking very quick, "the premises being thus settled, I proceed to observe, that the concatenation of self-existence, proceeding in a reciprocal duplicate ratio, naturally produce a problematical dialogism, which in some measure proves

Digitized by Google

that the essence of spirituality may be referred to the second predicable."—"Hold, hold,"—cried the other, "I deny that: Do you think that I can thus tamely submit to such heterodox doctrines?"—"What," replied the 'Squire, as if in a passion, "not submit! Answer me one plain question: Do you think Aristotle right when he says, that relatives are related?" "Undoubtedly," replied the other. "If so, then," cried the 'Squire, "answer me directly to what I propose: Whether do you judge the analytical investigation of the first part of my enthymen deficient secundum quoad, or quoad minus, and give me your reasons: give me your reasons, I say, directly."—"I protest," cried Moses, "I don't rightly comprehend the force of your reasoning; but if it be reduced to one simple proposition, I fancy it may then have an answer."—"O, sir," cried the 'Squire, "I am your most humble servant; I find you want me to furnish you with argument and intellects too. No, sir, there I protest you are too hard for me." This effectually raised the laugh against poor Moses, who sat the only dismal figure in a group of merry faces; nor did he offer a single syllable more during the whole entertainment.

But though all this gave me no pleasure, it had a very different effect upon Olivia, who mistook it for humor, though but a mere act of the memory. She thought him, therefore, a very fine gentleman; and such as consider what powerful ingredients a good figure, fine clothes, and fortune are in that character, will easily forgive her. Mr. Thornhill, notwithstanding his real ignorance, talked with ease, and could expatiate upon the common topics of conversation with fluency. It is not surprising then that such talents should win the affections of a girl, who by education was taught to value an appearance in herself, and consequently to set a value upon it in another.

Upon his departure, we again entered into a debate upon the merits of our young landlord. As he directed his looks and con-

Digitized by Google

versation to Olivia, it was no longer doubted but that she was the object that induced him to be our visitor. Nor did she seem to be much displeased at the innocent raillery of her brother and sister upon this occasion. Even Deborah herself seemed to share the glory of the day, and exulted in her daughter's victory as if it were her own. "And now, my dear," cried she to me, "I'll fairly own, that it was I that instructed my girls to encourage our landlord's addresses. I had always some ambition, and you now see that I was right; for who knows how this may end?" "Aye, who knows that indeed?" answered I with a groan: "for my part I don't much like it; and I could have been better pleased with one that was poor and honest, than this fine gentleman with his fortune and infidelity; for depend on't, if he be what I suspect him, no free-thinker shall ever have a child of mine."

"Sure, father," cried Moses, "you are too severe in this; for Heaven will never arraign him for what he thinks, but for what he does. Every man has a thousand vicious thoughts, which arise without his power to suppress. Thinking freely of religion may be involuntary with this gentleman; so that allowing his sentiments to be wrong, yet as he is purely passive in his assent, he is no more to be blamed for his errors, than the governor of a city without walls for the shelter he is obliged to afford an invading enemy."

"True, my son," cried I; "but, if the governor invites the enemy there, he is justly culpable. And such is always the case with those who embrace error. The vice does not lie in assenting to the proofs they see; but in being blind to many of the proofs that offer.* So that, though our erroneous opinions be involuntary when formed, yet as we have been wilfully corrupt, or very

* ["Like corrupt judges on a bench, they determine right on that part of the evidence they hear; but they will not hear all the evidence. Thus, my son, though," &c.—*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

negligent in forming them, we deserve punishment for our vice, or contempt for our folly."

My wife now kept up the conversation, though not the argument: she observed, that several very prudent men of our acquaintance were free-thinkers, and made very good husbands; and she knew some sensible girls that had skill enough to make converts of their spouses: "And who knows, my dear," continued she, "what Olivia may be able to do? The girl has a great deal to say upon every subject, and to my knowledge is very well skilled in controversy."

"Why, my dear, what controversy can she have read?" cried I. "It does not occur to me that I ever put such books into her hands: you certainly overrate her merit." "Indeed, papa," replied Olivia, "she does not; I have read a great deal of controversy. I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square; the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday the savage, and I am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious Courtship."* "Very well," cried I, "that's a good girl, I find you are perfectly qualified for making converts; and so go help your mother to make the gooseberry-pie."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN AMOUR, WHICH PROMISES LITTLE GOOD FORTUNE, YET MAY BE PRODUCTIVE OF MUCH.

The next morning we were again visited by Mr. Burchell, though I began, for certain reasons, to be displeased with the frequency of his return; but I could not refuse him my company

* [A work written, in 1722, by Daniel Defoe, to exhibit in a familiar manner the unhappy consequences of marriage between persons of opposite persuasions in religion.]

Digitized by Google

and my fireside. It is true his labor more than requited his entertainment; for he wrought among us with vigor, and either in the meadow or at the hay-rick put himself foremost. Besides, he had always something amusing to say that lessened our toil, and was at once so out of the way, and yet so sensible, that I loved, laughed at, and pitied him. My only dislike arose from an attachment he discovered to my daughter: he would, in a jesting manner, call her his little mistress, and when he bought each of the girls a set of ribands, hers was the finest. I know not how, but he every day seemed to become more amiable, his wit to improve, and his simplicity to assume the superior airs of wisdom.

Our family dined in the field, and we sat, or rather reclined, round a temperate repast, our cloth spread upon the hay, while Mr. Burchell gave cheerfulness to the feast. To heighten our satisfaction, two blackbirds answered each other from opposite hedges, the familiar redbreast came and pecked the crumbs from our hands, and every sound seemed but the echo of tranquillity. "I never sit thus," says Sophia, "but I think of the two lovers so sweetly described by Mr. Gay, who were struck dead in each other's arms. There is something so pathetic in the description, that I have read it a hundred times with new rapture."—"In my opinion," cried my son, "the finest strokes in that description are much below those in the Acis and Galatea of Ovid. The Roman poet understands the use of *contrast* better, and upon that figure artfully managed all strength in the pathetic de pends."—"It is remarkable," cried Mr. Burchell, "that both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by loading all their lines with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects, and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination

Digitized by Google

of luxuriant images, without plot or connection; a string of epithets that improve the sound, without carrying on the sense. But perhaps, madam, while I thus reprehend others, you'll think it just that I should give them an opportunity to retaliate, and indeed I have made this remark only to have an opportunity of introducing to the company a ballad, which, whatever be its other defects, is, I think, at least free from those I have mentioned."

A BALLAD.

"Turn, gentle Hermit of the Dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

"For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning as I go."

"Forbear, my son," the Hermit cries,
"To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

"Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

"Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate'er my cell bestows;
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

Digitized by Google

"No flocks that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them:

"But from the mountain's grassy side
A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruit supply'd,
And water from the spring.

"Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong;
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."

Soft as the dew from Heav'n descends,
His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure,
The lonely mansion lay,
A refuge to the neighb'ring poor,
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Requir'd a master's care;
The wicket, op'ning with a latch,
Receiv'd the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire
To take their ev'ning rest,
The Hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheer'd his pensive guest:

Digitized by Google

And spread his vegetable store,
And gayly press'd, and smil'd;
And skill'd in legendary lore
The ling'ring hours beguil'd.

Around, in sympathetic mirth,
Its tricks the kitten tries,
The cricket chirrups in the hearth,
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's woe,
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the Hermit spy'd,
With answ'ring care opprest:
"And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
"The sorrows of thy breast?

"From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove?
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love?

"Alas! the joys that fortune brings,
Are trifling and decay;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?

Digitized by Google

"And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair-one's jest:
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

"For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush
And spurn the sex," he said:
But while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surpris'd he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view;
Like colors o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast
Alternate spread alarms:
The lovely stranger stands confest
A maid in all her charms.

"And ah! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn," she cried;
Whose feet unhallow'd thus intrude
Where Heav'n and you reside.

"But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray:
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

"My father liv'd beside the Tyne,
A wealthy lord was he:
And all his wealth was mark'd as mine,
He had but only me.

Digitized by Google

"To win me from his tender arms,
Unnumber'd suitors came;
Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt or feign'd a flame.

"Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove;
Among the rest young Edwin bow'd,
But never talk'd of love.

"In humble, simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

"And when, beside me in the dale,
He caroll'd days of love,
His breath lent fragrance to the gale,
And music to the grove.

"The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of Heav'n refin'd,
Could nought of purity display
To emulate his mind.

"The dew, the blossom on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but woe to me,
Their constancy was mine.

"For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain.

Digitized by Google

"Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret where he died.

"But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

"And there forlorn despairing hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.

"Forbid it Heav'n!" the Hermit cried,
And clasp'd her to his breast;
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide,—
'Twas Edwin's self that prest.

"Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer turn to see
Thy own, thy long lost Edwin here,
Restor'd to love and thee.

"Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And ev'ry care resign:
And shall we never, never part,
My life,—my all that's mine?

"No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart,
Shall break thy Edwin's too."

While this ballad was reading, Sophia seemed to mix an air of tenderness with her approbation. But our tranquillity was

Digitized by Google

soon disturbed by the report of a gun just by us, and immediately after a man was seen bursting through the hedge, to take up the game he had killed. This sportsman was the 'Squire's chaplain, who had shot one of the blackbirds that so agreeably entertained us. So loud a report, and so near, startled my daughters; and I could perceive that Sophia in the fright had thrown herself into Mr. Burchell's arms for protection. The gentleman came up, and asked pardon for having disturbed us, affirming that he was ignorant of our being so near. He, therefore, sat down by my youngest daughter, and sportsman-like, offered her what he had killed that morning. She was going to refuse, but a private look from her mother soon induced her to correct the mistake, and accept his present, though with some reluctance. My wife, as usual, discovered her pride in a whisper, observing, that Sophy had made a conquest of the chaplain, as well as her sister had of the 'Squire. I suspected, however, with more probability, that her affections were placed upon a different object. The chaplain's errand was to inform us, that Mr. Thornhill had provided music and refreshments, and intended that night giving the young ladies a ball by moonlight, on the grass-plot before our door. "Nor can I deny," continued he, "but I have an interest in being first to deliver this message, as I expect for my reward to be honored with Miss Sophy's hand as a partner." To this my girl replied, that she should have no objection, if she could do it with honor; "But here," continued she, "is a gentleman," looking at Mr. Burchell, "who has been my companion in the task for the day, and it is fit he should share in its amusements." Mr. Burchell returned her a compliment for her intentions; but resigned her up to the chaplain, adding that he was to go that night five miles, being invited to a harvest supper. His refusal appeared to me a little extraordinary, nor could I conceive how so sensible a girl as my youngest, could thus prefer a man of

Digitized by Google

broken fortunes to one whose expectations were much greater. But as men are most capable of distinguishing merit in women, so the ladies often form the truest judgments of us. The two sexes seem placed as spies upon each other, and are furnished with different abilities, adapted for mutual inspection.

CHAPTER IX.

TWO LADIES OF GREAT DISTINCTION INTRODUCED.—SUPERIOR FINERY EVER SEEMS TO CONFER SUPERIOR BREEDING.

Mr. Burchell had scarcely taken leave, and Sophia consented to dance with the chaplain, when my little ones came running out to tell us that the 'Squire was come with a crowd of company. Upon our return, we found our landlord, with a couple of under gentlemen and two young ladies richly dressed, whom he introduced as women of very great distinction and fashion from town. We happened not to have chairs enough for the whole company; but Mr. Thornhill immediately proposed that every gentleman should sit in a lady's lap. This I positively objected to, notwithstanding a look of disapprobation from my wife. Moses was therefore dispatched to borrow a couple of chairs; and as we were in want of ladies to make up a set at country-dances, the two gentlemen went with him in quest of a couple of partners. Chairs and partners were soon provided. The gentlemen returned with my neighbor Flamborough's rosy daughters, flaunting with red top-knots. But an unlucky circumstance was not adverted to; though the Miss Flamboroughs were reckoned the very best of dancers in the parish, and understood the jig and the round-about to perfection; yet they were totally unacquainted with country-dances. This at first discomposed us: however, after a little shoving and dragging, they at last went merrily on.

Digitized by Google

Our music consisted of two fiddles, with a pipe and tabor. The moon shone bright, Mr. Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball, to the great delight of the spectators; for the neighbors hearing what was going forward, came flocking about us. My girl moved with so much grace and vivacity, that my wife could not avoid discovering the pride of her heart, by assuring me, that though the little chit did it so cleverly, all the steps were stolen from herself. The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success. They swam, sprawled, languished, and frisked; but all would not do: the gazers indeed owned that it was fine; but neighbor Flamborough observed, that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo. After the dance had continued about an hour, the two ladies, who were apprehensive of catching cold, moved to break up the ball. One of them, I thought, expressed her sentiments upon this occasion in a very coarse manner, when she observed, that by the *living jingo she was all of a muck of sweat.* Upon our return to the house, we found a very elegant cold supper, which Mr. Thornhill had ordered to be brought with him. The conversation at this time was more reserved than before. The two ladies threw my girls quite into the shade; for they would talk of nothing but high life, and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses. 'Tis true they once or twice mortified us sensibly by slipping out an oath; but that appeared to me as the surest symptom of their distinction, (though I am since informed that swearing is perfectly unfashionable). Their finery, however, threw a veil over any grossness in their conversation. My daughters seemed to regard their superior accomplishments with envy; and what appeared amiss was ascribed to tiptop quality breeding. But the condescension of the ladies was still superior to their other accomplishments. One of them observed, that had Miss Olivia seen a little more of

Digitized by Google

the world, it would greatly improve her. To which the other added, that a single winter in town would make little Sophia quite another thing. My wife warmly assented to both; adding, that there was nothing she more ardently wished than to give her girls a single winter's polishing. To this I could not help replying, that their breeding was already superior to their fortune; and that greater refinement would only serve to make their poverty ridiculous, and give them a taste for pleasures they had no right to possess.—"And what pleasures," cried Mr. Thornhill, "do they not deserve to possess, who have so much in their power to bestow? As for my part," continued he, "my fortune is pretty large, love, liberty, and pleasure are my maxims; but curse me if a settlement of half my estate could give my charming Olivia pleasure, it should be hers; and the only favor I would ask in return would be to add myself to the benefit." I was not such a stranger to the world as to be ignorant that this was the fashionable cant to disguise the insolence of the basest proposal; but I made an effort to suppress my resentment. "Sir," cried I, "the family which you now condescend to favor with your company, has been bred with as nice a sense of honor as you. Any attempts to injure that, may be attended with very dangerous consequences. Honor, sir, is our only possession at present, and of that last treasure we must be particularly careful."—I was soon sorry for the warmth with which I had spoken this, when the young gentleman, grasping my hand, swore he commended my spirit, though he disapproved my suspicions. "As to your present hint," continued he, "I protest nothing was farther from my heart than such a thought. No, by all that's tempting, the virtue that will stand a regular siege was never to my taste; for all my amours are carried by a coup de main."

The two ladies, who affected to be ignorant of the rest, seemed highly displeased with this last stroke of freedom, and began a

Digitized by Google

very discreet and serious dialogue upon virtue: in this my wife, the chaplain and I soon joined; and the 'Squire himself was at last brought to confess a sense of sorrow for his former excesses. We talked of the pleasures of temperance, and of the sun-shine in the mind unpolluted with guilt. I was so well pleased, that my little ones were kept up beyond the usual time to be edified by so much good conversation. Mr. Thornhill even went beyond me, and demanded if I had any objections to giving prayers. I joyfully embraced the proposal, and in this manner the night was passed in a most comfortable way, till at last the company began to think of returning. The ladies seemed very unwilling to part with my daughters; for whom they had conceived a particular affection, and joined in a request to have the pleasure of their company at home. The 'Squire seconded the proposal, and my wife added her entreaties; the girls too looked upon me as if they wished to go. In this perplexity I made two or three excuses, which my daughters as readily removed; so that at last I was obliged to give a peremptory refusal; for which we had nothing but sullen looks and short answers the whole day ensuing.

CHAPTER X.

THE FAMILY ENDEAVORS TO COPE WITH THEIR BETTERS. — THE MISERIES OF THE POOR WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO APPEAR ABOVE THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.

I now began to find that all my long and painful lectures upon temperance, simplicity, and contentment, were entirely disregarded. The distinctions lately paid us by our betters awaked that pride which I had laid asleep, but not removed. Our windows again, as formerly, were filled with washes for the neck and face. The sun was dreaded as an enemy to the skin without

Digitized by Google

doors, and the fire as a spoiler of the complexion within. My wife observed, that rising too early would hurt her daughters eyes, that working after dinner would redden their noses, and she convinced me that the hands never looked so white as when they did nothing. Instead therefore of finishing George's shirts, we now had them new modelling their old gauzes, or flourishing upon catgut. The poor Miss Flamboroughs, their former gay companions, were cast off as mean acquaintance, and the whole conversation ran upon high life, and high-lived company, with pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses.

But we could have borne all this, had not a fortune-telling gipsy came to raise us into perfect sublimity. The tawny sibyl no sooner appeared, than my girls came running to me for a shilling apiece to cross her hand with silver. To say the truth, I was tired of being always wise, and could not help gratifying their request, because I loved to see them happy. I gave each of them a shilling; though, for the honor of the family, it must be observed, that they never went without money themselves, as my wife always generously let them have a guinea each, to keep in their pockets; but with strict injunctions never to change it. After they had been closeted up with the fortune-teller for some time, I knew by their looks, upon their returning, that they had been promised something great.—"Well, my girls, how have you sped? Tell me, Livy, has the fortune-teller given thee a pennyworth?"—"I protest, papa," says the girl, "I believe she deals with somebody that's not right; for she positively declared, that I am to be married to a 'Squire in less than a twelvemonth!"—"Well, now, Sophy, my child," said I, "and what sort of a husband are you to have?" "Sir," replied she, "I am to have a Lord soon after my sister has married the 'Squire."—"How," cried I, "is that all you are to have for your two shillings? Only a Lord and a 'Squire for two shillings!

Digitized by Google

You fools, I could have promised you a Prince and a Nabob for half the money.

This curiosity of theirs, however, was attended with very serious effects: we now began to think ourselves designed by the stars to something exalted, and already anticipated our future grandeur.

It has been a thousand times observed, and I must observe it once more, that the hours we pass with happy prospects in view, are more pleasing than those crowned with fruition. In the first case, we cook the dish to our own appetite; in the latter, nature cooks it for us. It is impossible to repeat the train of agreeable reveries we called up for our entertainment. We looked upon our fortunes as once more rising; and as the whole parish asserted that the 'Squire was in love with my daughter, she was actually so with him; for they persuaded her into the passion. In this agreeable interval my wife had the most lucky dreams in the world, which she took care to tell us every morning, with great solemnity and exactness. It was one night a coffin and cross bones, the sign of an approaching wedding: at another time she imagined her daughter's pockets filled with farthings, a certain sign of their being shortly stuffed with gold. The girls themselves had their omens. They felt strange kisses on their lips; they saw rings in the candle, purses bounced from the fire, and true love knots lurked in the bottom of every tea-cup.

Towards the end of the week we received a card from the town ladies; in which, with their compliments, they hoped to see all our family at church the Sunday following. All Saturday morning I could perceive, in consequence of this, my wife and daughters in close conference together, and now and then glancing at me with looks that betrayed a latent plot. To be sincere, I had strong suspicions that some absurd proposal was preparing for appearing with splendor the next day. In the evening they

Digitized by Google

began their operations in a very regular manner, and my wife undertook to conduct the siege. After tea, when I seemed in spirits, she began thus——"I fancy, Charles, my dear, we shall have a great deal of good company at our church to-morrow."—"Perhaps we may, my dear," returned I; "though you need be under no uneasiness about that, you shall have a sermon whether there be or not."——"That is what I expect," returned she; "but I think, my dear, we ought to appear there as decently as possible, for who knows what may happen?"—"Your precautions," replied I, "are highly commendable. A decent behavior and appearance in church is what charms me. We should be devout and humble, cheerful and serene."—"Yes," cried she, "I know that; but I mean we should go there in as proper a manner as possible; not altogether like the scrubs about us."—"You are quite right, my dear," returned I, "and I was going to make the very same proposal. The proper manner of going is, to go there as early as possible, to have time for meditation before the service begins."—"Phoo, Charles," interrupted she, "all that is very true; but not what I would be at. I mean, we should go there genteelly. You know the church is two miles off, and I protest I don't like to see my daughters trudging up to their pew all blowzed and red with walking, and looking for all the world as if they had been winners at a smock race. Now, my dear, my proposal is this: there are our two plough-horses, the colt that has been in our family these nine years, and his companion Blackberry, that has scarcely done an earthly thing for this month past. They are both grown fat and lazy. Why should not they do something as well as we? And let me tell you, when Moses has trimmed them a little, they will cut a very tolerable figure."

To this proposal I objected, that walking would be twenty times more genteel than such a paltry conveyance, as Blackberry was wall-eyed, and the colt wanted a tail: that they had never

Digitized by Google

been broke to the rein; but had a hundred vicious tricks; and that we had but one saddle and pillion in the whole house. All these objections, however, were overruled; so that I was obliged to comply. The next morning I perceived them not a little busy in collecting such materials as might be necessary for the expedition; but as I found it would be a business of time, I walked on to the church before, and they promised speedily to follow. I waited near an hour in the reading desk for their arrival; but not finding them come as expected, I was obliged to begin, and went through the service, not without some uneasiness at finding them absent. This was increased when all was finished, and no appearance of the family. I therefore walked back by the horseway, which was five miles round, though the footway was but two, and when got half way home perceived the procession marching slowly forward towards the church; my son, my wife, and the two little ones exalted on one horse, and my two daughters upon the other. I demanded the cause of their delay; but I soon found by their looks they had met with a thousand misfortunes on the road. The horses had at first refused to move from the door, till Mr. Burchell was kind enough to beat them forward for about two hundred yards with his cudgel. Next, the straps of my wife's pillion broke down, and they were obliged to stop to repair them before they could proceed. After that, one of the horses took it into his head to stand still, and neither blows nor entreaties could prevail with him to proceed. He was just recovering from this dismal situation when I found them: but perceiving every thing safe, I own their present mortification did not much displease me, as it would give me many opportunities of future triumph, and teach my daughters more humility.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAMILY STILL RESOLVE TO HOLD UP THEIR HEADS.

Michaelmas eve happening on the next day, we were invited to burn nuts and play tricks at neighbor Flamborough's. Our late mortifications had humbled us a little, or it is probable we might have rejected such an invitation with contempt: however, we suffered ourselves to be happy. Our honest neighbor's goose and dumplings were fine, and the lamb's wool, even in the opinion of my wife, who was a connoisseur, was excellent.* It is true, his manner of telling stories was not quite so well. They were very long, and very dull, and all about himself, and we had laughed at them ten times before: however, we were kind enough to laugh at them once more.

Mr. Burchell, who was of the party, was always fond of seeing some innocent amusement going forward, and set the boys and girls to blind man's buff. My wife too was persuaded to join in the diversion, and it gave me pleasure to think she was not yet too old. In the mean time, my neighbor and I looked on, laughed at every feat, and praised our own dexterity when we were young. Hot cockles succeeded next, questions and com-

* Lamb's wool was a favorite winter beverage among our forefathers, for the composition of which the following receipt has been preserved by Archdeacon Nares:—"The pulpe of the roasted apples, in number foure or five, according to the greatness of the apples, mixed in a wine quart of fair water labored together, until it come to be as apples, which we call lamb's wool."—Johnson's Gerard, p. 1460. To prevent mistakes, it should be added, that lamb's wool is not the apples mixed with water, but that mixture added to ale. Mr. Nares adds, that the name was probably taken from its smoothness and softness resembling the wool of lambs. A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, for May, 1784, says, he has often met with lamb's wool in Ireland, where it is a constant ingredient at a merry-making on holy-eve, or the day before All Saints' day —See Encyclop. Metrop., and Brand's Popular Antiquities.

Digitized by Google

mands followed that, and last of all, they sat down to hunt the slipper. As every person may not be acquainted with this primeval pastime, it may be necessary to observe, that the company at this play plant themselves in a ring upon the ground, all except one who stands in the middle, whose business it is to catch a shoe, which the company shove about under their hams from one to another, something like a weaver's shuttle. As it is impossible, in this case, for the lady who is up to face all the company at once, the great beauty of the play lies in hitting her a thump with the heel of the shoe on that side least capable of making a defence. It was in this manner that my eldest daughter was hemmed in, and thumped about, all blowzed, in spirits, and bawling for fair play, fair play, with a voice that might deafen a ballad-singer, when confusion on confusion, who should enter the room but our two great acquaintances from town, Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs! Description would but beggar, therefore it is unnecessary to describe this new mortification. Death! To be seen by ladies of such high breeding in such vulgar attitudes! Nothing better could ensue from such a vulgar play of Mr. Flamborough's proposing. We seemed stuck to the ground for some time, as if actually petrified with amazement.

The two ladies had been at our house to see us, and finding us from home, came after us hither, as they were uneasy to know what accident could have kept us from church the day before. Olivia undertook to be our prolocutor, and delivered the whole in a summary way, only saying, "We were thrown from our horses." At which account the ladies were greatly concerned; but being told the family received no hurt, they were extremely glad: but being informed that we were almost killed by the fright, they were vastly sorry; but hearing that we had a very good night, they were extremely glad again. Nothing could exceed their

Digitized by Google

complaisance to my daughters; their professions the last evening were warm, but now they were ardent. They protested a desire of having a more lasting acquaintance. Lady Blarney was particularly attached to Olivia; Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs (I love to give the whole name) took a greater fancy to her sister. They supported the conversation between themselves, while my daughters sat silent, admiring their exalted breeding. But as every reader, however beggarly himself, is fond of high-lived dialogues, with anecdotes of Lords, Ladies, and Knights of the Garter, I must beg leave to give him the concluding part of the present conversation.

"All that I know of the matter," cried Miss Skeggs, "is this, that it may be true, or it may not be true: but this I can assure your Ladyship, that the whole rout was in amaze; his Lordship turned all manner of colors, my Lady fell into a swoon, but Sir Tomkyn, drawing his sword, swore he was hers to the last drop of his blood."

"Well," replied our Peeress, "this I can say, that the Duchess never told me a syllable of the matter, and I believe her Grace would keep nothing a secret from me. This you may depend upon as fact, that, the next morning, my Lord Duke cried out three times to his valet-de-chambre, Jernigan, Jernigan, Jernigan, bring me my garters."

But previously I should have mentioned the very impolite behavior of Mr. Burchell, who, during this discourse, sat with his face turned to the fire, and at the conclusion of every sentence would cry out *fudge*,* an expression which displeased us all, and in some measure damped the rising spirit of the conversation.

* [An expression of the utmost contempt, usually bestowed on absurd or lying talkers. It probably was introduced in Goldsmith's time, and is now common in colloquial language.—Todd.]

Digitized by Google

"Besides, my dear Skeggs," continued our Peeress, "there is nothing of this in the copy of verses that Dr. Burdock made upon the occasion." *Fudge!*

"I am surprised at that," cried Miss Skeggs; "for he seldom leaves any thing out, as he writes only for his own amusement. But can your Ladyship favor me with a sight of them?" *Fudge!*

"My dear creature," replied our Peeress, "do you think I carry such things about me? Though they are very fine to be sure, and I think myself something of a judge; at least I know what pleases myself. Indeed, I was ever an admirer of all Doctor Burdock's little pieces; for except what he does, and our dear Countess at Hanover-square, there's nothing comes out but the most lowest stuff in nature; not a bit of high life among them." *Fudge!*

"Your Ladyship should except," says t'other, "your own things in the Lady's Magazine. I hope you'll say there's nothing low-lived there? But I suppose we are to have no more from that quarter?" *Fudge!*

"Why, my dear," says the Lady, "you know my reader and companion has left me, to be married to Captain Roach, and as my poor eyes won't suffer me to write myself, I have been for some time looking out for another. A proper person is no easy matter to find, and to be sure thirty pounds a year is a small stipend for a well-bred girl of character, that can read, write, and behave in company; as for the chits about town, there is no bearing them about one." *Fudge!*

"That I know," cried Miss Skeggs, "by experience. For of the three companions I had this last half year, one of them refused to do plain work an hour in a day, another thought twenty-five guineas a year too small a salary, and I was obliged to send away the third, because I suspected an intrigue with the

Digitized by Google

chaplain. Virtue, my dear Lady Blarney, virtue is worth any price; but where is that to be found?" *Fudge!*

My wife had been for a long time all attention to this discourse; but was particularly struck with the latter part of it. Thirty pounds and twenty-five guineas a year made fifty-six pounds five shillings English money, all which was in a manner going a-begging, and might easily be secured in the family. She for a moment studied my looks for approbation; and, to own a truth, I was of opinion, that two such places would fit our two daughters exactly. Besides, if the 'Squire had any real affection for my eldest daughter, this would be the way to make her every way qualified for her fortune. My wife, therefore, was resolved that we should not be deprived of such advantages for want of assurance, and undertook to harangue for the family. "I hope," cried she, "your Ladyships will pardon my present presumption. It is true, we have no right to pretend to such favors; but yet it is natural for me to wish putting my children forward in the world. And I will be bold to say my two girls have had a pretty good education, and capacity, at least the country can't show better. They can read, write, and cast accompts; they understand their needle, broadstitch, cross and change, and all manner of plain work; they can pink, point, and frill; and know something of music; they can do up small clothes, work upon catgut; my eldest can cut paper, and my youngest has a very pretty manner of telling fortunes upon the cards." *Fudge!*

When she had delivered this pretty piece of eloquence, the two ladies looked at each other a few minutes in silence, with an air of doubt and importance. At last, Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs condescended to observe, that the young ladies, from the opinion she could form of them from so slight an acquaintance, seemed very fit for such employments: "But a thing of this kind, Madam," cried she, addressing my spouse, "requires

Digitized by Google

a thorough examination into characters, and a more perfect knowledge of each other. Not, madam," continued she, "that I in the least suspect the young ladies' virtue, prudence, and discretion; but there is a form in these things, madam, there is a form."

My wife approved her suspicions very much, observing, that she was very apt to be suspicious herself; but referred her to all the neighbors for a character: but this our Peeress declined as unnecessary, alleging that her cousin Thornhill's recommendation would be sufficient, and upon this we rested our petition.

CHAPTER XII.

FORTUNE SEEMS RESOLVED TO HUMBLE THE FAMILY OF WAKEFIELD.—MORTIFICATIONS ARE OFTEN MORE PAINFUL THAN REAL CALAMITIES.

When we were returned home, the night was dedicated to schemes of future conquest. Deborah exerted much sagacity in conjecturing which of the two girls was likely to have the best place, and most opportunities of seeing good company. The only obstacle to our preferment was in obtaining the 'Squire's recommendation; but he had already shown us too many instances of his friendship to doubt of it now. Even in bed my wife kept up the usual theme: "Well, faith, my dear Charles, between ourselves, I think we have made an excellent day's work of it."—— "Pretty well," cried I, not knowing what to say.—— "What, only pretty well!" returned she. "I think it is very well. Suppose the girls should come to make acquaintances of taste in town! This I am assured of, that London is the only place in the world for all manner of husbands. Besides, my dear, stranger things happen every day: and as ladies of quality are so taken with my

Digitized by Google

daughters, what will not men of quality be! Entre nous, I protest I like my Lady Blarney vastly, so very obliging. However, Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs has my warm heart. But yet, when they came to talk of places in town, you saw at once how I nailed them. Tell me, my dear, don't you think I did for my children there?"——"Ay," returned I, not knowing well what to think of the matter, "heaven grant they may be both the better for it this day three months! This was one of those observations I usually made to impress my wife with an opinion of my sagacity; for if the girls succeeded, then it was a pious wish fulfilled; but if any thing unfortunate ensued, then it might be looked upon as a prophecy. All this conversation, however, was only preparatory to another scheme, and indeed I dreaded as much. This was nothing less than, that as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was grown old, at a neighboring fair, and buy us a horse that would carry single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly; but it was as stoutly defended. However, as I weakened, my antagonists gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. "No, my dear," said she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to very good advantage; you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to intrust him with this commission; and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking

Digitized by Google

his hat with pins. The business of the toilet being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt, with a deal box before him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth they call thunder and lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black riband. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him good luck, good luck, till we could see him no longer.

He was scarcely gone, when Mr. Thornhill's butler came to congratulate us upon our good fortune, saying, that he overheard his young master mention our names with great commendation.

Good fortune seemed resolved not to come alone. Another footman from the same family followed, with a card for my daughters, importing, that the two ladies had received such pleasing accounts from Mr. Thornhill of us all, that, after a few previous inquiries, they hoped to be perfectly satisfied. "Aye," cried my wife, "I now see it is no easy matter to get into families of the great; but when one once gets in, then, as Moses says, one may go to sleep." To this piece of humor, for she intended it for wit, my daughters assented with a loud laugh of pleasure. In short, such was her satisfaction at this message, that she actually put her hand in her pocket, and gave the messenger sevenpence half-penny.

This was to be our visiting day. The next that came was Mr. Burchell, who had been at the fair. He brought my little ones a pennyworth of gingerbread each, which my wife undertook to keep for them, and give them by letters at a time. He brought my daughters also a couple of boxes, in which they might keep wafers, snuff, patches, or even money, when they got it. My wife was usually fond of a weasel-skin purse, as being the most lucky; but this by the by. We had still a regard for Mr. Burchell,

Digitized by Google

though his late rude behavior was in some measure displeasing; nor could we now avoid communicating our happiness to him, and asked his advice: although we seldom followed advice, we were all ready enough to ask it. When he read the note from the two ladies, he shook his head, and observed, that an affair of this sort demanded the utmost circumspection.——This air of diffidence highly displeased my wife. "I never doubted, sir," cried she, "your readiness to be against my daughters and me. You have more circumspection than is wanted. However, I fancy when we come to ask advice, we will apply to persons who seem to have made use of it themselves."——"Whatever my own conduct may have been, madam," replied he, "is not the present question; though as I have made no use of advice myself, I should in conscience give it to those that will."——As I was apprehensive this answer might draw on a repartee, making up by abuse what it wanted in wit, I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair, as it was now almost nightfall.——"Never mind our son," cried my wife, "depend upon it he knows what he is about. I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen of a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing.*—But as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back."

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedler.—"Welcome, welcome, Moses; well my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?"——"I have brought you myself,"

* [This phrase, used as illustrative of the homeliness of the speaker, was one of those untruly attributed as common to the poet himself, by the retailers of anecdote; who in this instance, as in others, have turned his humor against himself.]

Digitized by Google

cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.—"Ah, Moses," cried my wife, "that we know, but where is the horse?" "I have sold him," cried Moses, "for three pounds five shillings and twopence."—"Well done, my good boy," returned she, "I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then."——"I have brought back no money," cried Moses again. "I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is," pulling out a bundle from his breast: here they are: a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases."——"A gross of green spectacles!" repeated my wife in a faint voice. "And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles!"—"Dear mother," cried the boy, "why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money."—"A fig for the silver rims," cried my wife, in a passion: "I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce."—"You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, "about selling the rims; for they are not worth sixpence, for I perceive they are only copper varnished over."—"What," cried my wife, "not silver, the rims not silver!" "No," cried I, "no more silver than your saucepan."—"And so," returned she, "we have parted with the colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and shagreen cases! A murrain take such trumpery. The blockhead has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better."——"There, my dear," cried I, "you are wrong, he should not have known them at all."—"Marry, hang the idiot," returned she, "to bring me such stuff, if I had them I would throw them in the fire." "There again you are wrong, my dear," cried I; "for though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing."

Digitized by Google

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He now saw that he had indeed been imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend looking man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one to sell. "Here," continued Moses, "we met another man, very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying, that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of the value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr. Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me, and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us."

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. BURCHELL IS FOUND TO BE AN ENEMY; FOR HE HAS THE CONFIDENCE TO GIVE DISAGREEABLE ADVICE.

Our family had now made several attempts to be fine; but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. I endeavored to take the advantage of every disappointment, to improve their good sense in proportion as they were frustrated in ambition. "You see, my children," cried I, "how little is to be got by attempts to impose upon the world, in coping with our betters. Such as are poor and will associate with none but the rich, are hated by those they avoid, and despised by those they follow. Unequal combinations are always disadvantageous to the weaker side: the rich having the pleasure, and the poor the inconveniences that result from them. But come, Dick, my boy,

Digitized by Google

and repeat the fable that you were reading to-day, for the good of the company."

"Once upon a time," cried the child, "a Giant and a Dwarf were friends, and kept together. They made a bargain that they would never forsake each other, but go seek adventures. The first battle they fought was with two Saracens; and the Dwarf, who was very courageous, dealt one of the champions a most angry blow. It did the Saracen very little injury, who lifting up his sword, fairly struck off the poor Dwarf's arm. He was now in a woful plight; but the Giant coming to his assistance, in a short time left the two Saracens dead on the plain; and the Dwarf cut off the dead man's head out of spite. They then travelled on to another adventure. This was against three bloody-minded Satyrs, who were carrying away a damsel in distress. The Dwarf was not quite so fierce now as before; but for all that struck the first blow, which was returned by another, that knocked out his eye; but the Giant was soon up with them, and had they not fled, would certainly have killed them every one. They were all very joyful for this victory, and the damsel who was relieved, fell in love with the Giant and married him. They now travelled far, and farther than I can tell, till they met with a company of robbers. The Giant, for the first time, was foremost now; but the Dwarf was not far behind. The battle was stout and long. Wherever the Giant came all fell before him; but the Dwarf had like to have been killed more than once. At last the victory declared for the two adventurers; but the Dwarf lost his leg. The Dwarf was now without an arm, a leg, and an eye, while the Giant was without a single wound. Upon which he cried out to his little companion, My little hero, this is glorious sport; let us get one victory more, and then we shall have honor for ever. No, cries the Dwarf, who was by this time grown wiser, no, I declare off; I'll fight no more: for I find in every battle

Digitized by Google

that you get all the honor and rewards, but all the blows fall upon me."

I was going to moralize this fable, when our attention was called off to a warm dispute between my wife and Mr. Burchell, upon my daughters' intended expedition to town. My wife very strenuously insisted upon the advantages that would result from it. Mr. Burchell, on the contrary, dissuaded her with great ardor, and I stood neuter. His present dissuasions seemed but the second part of those which were received with so ill a grace in the morning. The dispute grew high, while poor Deborah, instead of reasoning stronger, talked louder, and at last was obliged to take shelter from a defeat in clamor. The conclusion of her harangue, however, was highly displeasing to us all: she knew, she said, of some who had their own secret reasons for what they advised; but, for her part, she wished such to stay away from her house for the future.—"Madam," cried Burchell, with looks of great composure, which tended to inflame her the more, "as for secret reasons, you are right: I have secret reasons, which I forbear to mention, because you are not able to answer those of which I make no secret: but I find my visits here are become troublesome; I'll take my leave therefore now, and perhaps come once more to take a final farewell when I am quitting the country." Thus saying, he took up his hat, nor could the attempts of Sophia, whose looks seemed to upbraid his precipitancy, prevent his going.

When gone, we all regarded each other for some minutes with confusion. My wife, who knew herself to be the cause, strove to hide her concern with a forced smile, and an air of assurance, which I was willing to reprove: "How, woman," cried I to her, "is it thus we treat strangers? Is it thus we return their kindness? Be assured, my dear, that these were the harshest words, and to me the most unpleasing that have escaped your lips!"—"Why would he provoke me, then?" replied she; "but I know

Digitized by Google

the motives of his advice perfectly well. He would prevent my girls from going to town, that he may have the pleasure of my youngest daughter's company here at home. But whatever happens, she shall choose better company than such low-lived fellows as he."—"Low-lived, my dear, do you call him?" cried I; "it is very possible we may mistake this man's character, for he seems upon some occasions the most finished gentleman I ever knew. ——Tell me, Sophia, my girl, has he ever given you any secret instances of his attachment?"—"His conversation with me, sir," replied my daughter, "has ever been sensible, modest, and pleasing. As to aught else, no, never. Once, indeed, I remember to have heard him say, he never knew a woman who could find merit in a man that seemed poor." "Such, my dear," cried I, "is the common cant of all the unfortunate or idle. But I hope you have been taught to judge properly of such men, and that it would be even madness to expect happiness from one who has been so very bad an economist of his own. Your mother and I have now better prospects for you. The next winter, which you will probably spend in town, will give you opportunities of making a more prudent choice."

What Sophia's reflections were upon this occasion I can't pretend to determine; but I was not displeased at the bottom, that we were rid of a guest from whom I had much to fear. Our breach of hospitality went to my conscience a little; but I quickly silenced that monitor by two or three specious reasons, which served to satisfy and reconcile me to myself. The pain which conscience gives the man who has already done wrong, is soon got over. Conscience is a coward, and those faults it has not strength enough to prevent, it seldom has justice enough to accuse.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

FRESH MORTIFICATIONS, OR A DEMONSTRATION THAT SEEMING CALAMITIES MAY BE REAL BLESSINGS.

The journey of my daughters to town was now resolved upon, Mr. Thornhill having kindly promised to inspect their conduct himself, and inform us by letter of their behavior. But it was thought indispensably necessary that their appearance should equal the greatness of their expectations, which could not be done without expense. We debated, therefore, in full council what were the easiest methods of raising money, or, more properly speaking, what we could most conveniently sell. The deliberation was soon finished; it was found that our remaining horse was utterly useless for the plough, without his companion, and equally unfit for the road, as wanting an eye; it was therefore determined that we should dispose of him for the purposes above mentioned, at the neighboring fair, and, to prevent imposition, that I should go with him myself. Though this was one of the first mercantile transactions of my life, yet I had no doubt about acquitting myself with reputation. The opinion a man forms of his own prudence is measured by that of the company he keeps; and as mine was mostly in the family way, I had conceived no unfavorable sentiments of my worldly wisdom. My wife, however, next morning, at parting, after I had got some paces from the door, called me back, to advise me, in a whisper, to have all my eyes about me.

I had, in the usual forms, when I came to the fair, put my horse through all his paces; but for some time had no bidders. At last a chapman approached, and, after he had for a good while examined the horse round, finding him blind of one eye, he would have nothing to say to him; a second came up; but

Digitized by Google

observing he had a spavin, declared he would not take him for the driving home: a third perceived he had a windgall, and would bid no money: a fourth knew by his eye that he had the botts; a fifth wondered what a plague I could do at the fair with a blind, spavined, galled hack, that was only fit to be cut up for a dog-kennel. By this time I began to have a most hearty contempt for the poor animal myself, and was almost ashamed at the approach of every customer; for though I did not entirely believe all the fellows told me, yet I reflected that the number of witnesses was a strong presumption they were right, and St. Gregory, upon good works, professes himself to be of the same opinion.

I was in this mortifying situation, when a brother clergyman, an old acquaintance, who had also business at the fair, came up, and shaking me by the hand, proposed adjourning to a public house and taking a glass of whatever we could get. I readily closed with the offer, and entering an ale-house, we were shown into a little back room, where there was only a venerable old man, who sat wholly intent over a large book, which he was reading. I never in my life saw a figure that prepossessed me more favorably. His locks of silver gray venerably shaded his temples, and his green old age seemed to be the result of health and benevolence. However his presence did not interrupt our conversation: My friend and I discoursed on the various turns of fortune we had met; the Whistonian controversy, my last pamphlet, the archdeacon's reply, and the hard measure that was dealt me. But our attention was in a short time taken off by the appearance of a youth, who, entering the room, respectfully said something softly to the old stranger. "Make no apologies, my child," said the old man, "to do good is a duty we owe to all our fellow-creatures: take this, I wish it were more: but five pounds will relieve your distress, and you are welcome." The modest youth shed tears of gratitude, and yet his gratitude

Digitized by Google

was scarcely equal to mine. I could have hugged the good old man in my arms, his benevolence pleased me so. He continued to read, and we resumed our conversation, until my companion, after some time, recollecting that he had business to transact in the fair, promised to be soon back; adding, that he always desired to have as much of Dr. Primrose's company as possible. The old gentleman, hearing my name mentioned, seemed to look at me with attention for some time, and when my friend was gone, most respectfully demanded if I was any way related to the great Primrose, that courageous monogamist, who had been the bulwark of the church. Never did my heart feel sincerer rapture than at that moment. "Sir," cried I, "the applause of so good a man, as I am sure you are, adds to that happiness in my breast which your benevolence has already excited. You behold before you, sir, that Doctor Primrose, the monogamist, whom you have been pleased to call great. You here see that unfortunate Divine, who has so long, and it would ill become me to say, successfully, fought against the deuterogamy of the age." "Sir," cried the stranger, struck with awe, "I fear I have been too familiar; but you'll forgive my curiosity, sir: I beg pardon." "Sir," cried I, grasping his hand, "you are so far from displeasing me by your familiarity that I must beg you'll accept my friendship, as you already have my esteem."——"Then with gratitude I accept the offer," cried he, squeezing me by the hand, "thou glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy; and do I behold—" I here interrupted what he was going to say; for though, as an author, I could digest no small share of flattery, yet now my modesty would permit no more. However, no lovers in romance ever cemented a more instantaneous friendship. We talked upon several subjects: at first I thought he seemed rather devout than learned, and began to think he despised all human doctrines as dross. Yet this no way lessened him in my esteem; for I had

Digitized by Google

for some time begun privately to harbor such an opinion myself. I therefore took occasion to observe, that the world in general began to be blameably indifferent as to doctrinal matters, and followed human speculations too much——"Ay, sir," replied he, as if he had reserved all his learning to that moment, "Ay, sir, the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled philosophers of all ages. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world? Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words, *Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan*, which imply that all things have neither beginning nor end. Manetho also, who lived about the time of Nebuchadon-Asser, Asser being a Syriac word usually applied as a surname to the kings of that country, as Teglat Phael-Asser, Nabon-Asser, he, I say, formed a conjecture equally absurd; for as we usually say, *ek to biblion kubernetes*, which implies that books will never teach the world; so he attempted to investigate—But, sir, I ask pardon, I am straying from the question."———That he actually was: nor could I for my life see how the creation of the world had any thing to do with the business I was talking of; but it was sufficient to show me that he was a man of letters, and I now reverenced him the more. I was resolved therefore to bring him to the touchstone: but he was too mild and too gentle to contend for victory. Whenever I made any observation that looked like a challenge to controversy, he would smile, shake his head, and say nothing; by which I understood he could say much, if he thought proper. The subject therefore insensibly changed from the business of antiquity to that which brought us both to the fair; mine I told him was to sell a horse, and very luckily indeed, his was to buy one for one of his tenants. My horse was soon produced, and in fine we struck a bargain. Nothing now remained but to pay me, and

Digitized by Google

he accordingly pulled out a thirty pound note, and bid me change it. Not being in a capacity of complying with this demand, he ordered his footman to be called up, who made his appearance in a very genteel livery. "Here, Abraham," cried he, "go and get gold for this; you'll do it at neighbor Jackson's, or any where." While the fellow was gone, he entertained me with a pathetic harangue on the great scarcity of silver, which I undertook to improve, by deploring also the great scarcity of gold; so that by the time Abraham returned, we had both agreed that money was never so hard to be come at as now. Abraham returned to inform us, that he had been over the whole fair and could not get change, though he had offered half a crown for doing it. This was a very great disappointment to us all; but the old gentleman having paused a little, asked me if I knew one Solomon Flamborough, in my part of the country: upon replying that he was my next door neighbor: "If that be the case then," returned he, "I believe we shall deal. You shall have a draught upon him, payable at sight; and let me tell you he is as warm a man as any within five miles round him. Honest Solomon and I have been acquainted for many years together. I remember I always beat him at three jumps; but he could hop on one leg farther than I." A draught upon my neighbor was to me the same as money; for I was sufficiently convinced of his ability. The draught was signed and put into my hands, and Mr. Jenkinson, the old gentleman, his man Abraham, and my horse, old Blackberry, trotted off very well pleased with each other.

After a short interval being left to reflection, I began to recollect that I had done wrong in taking a draught from a stranger, and so prudently resolved upon following the purchaser, and having back my horse. But this was now too late: I therefore made directly homewards, resolving to get the draught changed into money at my friend's as fast as possible. I found my hon-

Digitized by Google

est neighbor smoking his pipe at his own door, and informing him that I had a small bill upon him, he read it twice over. "You can read the name I suppose," cried I, "Ephraim Jenkinson." "Yes," returned he, "the name is written plain enough, and I know the gentleman too, the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven. This is the very same rogue who sold us the spectacles. Was he not a venerable looking man, with gray hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes? And did he not talk a long string of learning about Greek and cosmogony, and the world?" To this I replied with a groan. "Aye," continued he, "he has but that one piece of learning in the world, and he always talks it away whenever he finds a scholar in company; but I know the rogue, and will catch him yet."

Though I was already sufficiently mortified, my greatest struggle was to come, in facing my wife and daughters. No truant was ever more afraid of returning to school, there to behold his master's visage, than I was of going home. I was determined, however, to anticipate their fury, by first falling into a passion myself.

But, alas! upon entering, I found the family no way disposed for battle. My wife and girls were all in tears, Mr. Thornhill having been there that day to inform them, that their journey to town was entirely over. The two ladies having heard reports of us from some malicious person about us, were that day set out for London. He could neither discover the tendency nor the author of these; but whatever they might be, or whoever might have broached them, he continued to assure our family of his friendship and protection. I found, therefore, that they bore my disappointment with great resignation, as it was eclipsed in the greatness of their own. But what perplexed us most was to think who could be so base as to asperse the character of a family so harmless as ours, too humble to excite envy, and too inoffensive to create disgust.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

ALL MR. BURCHELL'S VILLAINY AT ONCE DETECTED.—THE FOLLY OF BEING OVER-WISE.

That evening and a part of the following day was employed in fruitless attempts to discover our enemies: scarcely a family in the neighborhood but incurred our suspicions, and each of us had reasons for our opinion best known to ourselves. As we were in this perplexity, one of our little boys, who had been playing abroad, brought in a letter-case, which he found on the green. It was quickly known to belong to Mr. Burchell, with whom it had been seen, and, upon examination, contained some hints upon different subjects; but what particularly engaged our attention was a sealed note, superscribed, *the copy of a letter to be sent to the two ladies at Thornhill-castle.* It instantly occurred that he was the base informer, and we deliberated whether the note should not be broke open. I was against it; but Sophia, who said she was sure that of all men he would be the last to be guilty of so much baseness, insisted upon its being read. In this she was seconded by the rest of the family, and, at their joint solicitation, I read as follows:

"Ladies,

"The bearer will sufficiently satisfy you as to the person from whom this comes: one at least the friend of innocence, and ready to prevent its being seduced I am informed for a truth, tha you have some intention of bringing two young ladies to town, whom I have some knowledge of, under the character of companions. As I would neither have simplicity imposed upon, nor virtue contaminated, I must offer it as my opinion, that the impropriety of such a step will be attended with dangerous consequences. It has never been my way to treat the infamous or the

Digitized by Google

lewd with severity; nor should I now have taken this method of explaining myself, or reproving folly, did it not aim at guilt. Take, therefore, the admonition of a friend, and seriously reflect on the consequences of introducing infamy and vice into retreats where peace and innocence have hitherto resided."

Our doubts were now at an end. There seemed, indeed, something applicable to both sides in this letter, and its censures might as well be referred to those to whom it was written, as to us; but the malicious meaning was obvious, and we went no farther. My wife had scarcely patience to hear me to the end, but railed at the writer with unrestrained resentment. Olivia was equally severe, and Sophia seemed perfectly amazed at his baseness. As for my part, it appeared to me one of the vilest instances of unprovoked ingratitude I had met with. Nor could I account for it in any other manner than by imputing it to his desire of detaining my youngest daughter in the country, to have the more frequent opportunities of an interview. In this manner we all sat ruminating upon schemes of vengeance, when our other little boy came running in to tell us that Mr. Burchell was approaching at the other end of the field. It is easier to conceive than describe the complicated sensations which are felt from the pain of a recent injury, and the pleasure of approaching vengeance. Though our intentions were only to upbraid him with his ingratitude, yet it was resolved to do it in a manner that would be perfectly cutting. For this purpose we agreed to meet him with our usual smiles, to chat in the beginning with more than ordinary kindness, to amuse him a little; and then in the midst of the flattering calm to burst upon him like an earthquake, and overwhelm him with a sense of his own baseness. This being resolved upon, my wife undertook to manage the business herself, as she really had some talents for such an undertaking.

Digitized by Google

We saw him approach; he entered, drew a chair, and sat down. ——"A fine day, Mr. Burchell."——"A very fine day, Doctor; though I fancy we shall have some rain, by the shooting of my corns."——"The shooting of your horns," cried my wife, in a loud fit of laughter, and then asked pardon for being fond of a joke.——"Dear madam," replied he, "I pardon you with all my heart; for I protest I should not have thought it a joke had you not told me."—"Perhaps not, sir," cried my wife, winking at us, "and yet I dare say you can tell us how many jokes go to an ounce?"—"I fancy, madam," returned Burchell, "you have been reading a jest book this morning, that ounce of jokes is so very good a conceit; and yet, madam, I had rather see half an ounce of understanding."—"I believe you might," cried my wife, still smiling at us, though the laugh was against her; "and yet I have seen some men pretend to understanding that have very little."—"And no doubt," returned her antagonist, "you have known ladies set up for wit that had none."—I quickly began to find that my wife was likely to gain but little at this business; so I resolved to treat him in a style of more severity myself. "Both wit and understanding," cried I, "are trifles, without integrity; it is that which gives value to every character. The ignorant peasant, without fault, is greater than the philosopher with many; for what is genius or courage without a heart? *An honest man is the noblest work of God.*"

"I always held that hackneyed maxim of Pope," returned Mr. Burchell, "as very unworthy of a man of genius, and a base desertion of his own superiority. As the reputation of books is raised not by their freedom from defect, but the greatness of their beauties; so should that of men be prized not for their exemption from fault, but the size of those virtues they are possessed of. The scholar may want prudence, the statesman may have pride, and the champion ferocity; but shall we prefer to these the low

Digitized by Google

mechanic, who laboriously plods through life without censure or applause? We might as well prefer the tame correct paintings of the Flemish school to the erroneous, but sublime animations of the Roman pencil."

"Sir," replied I, "your present observation is just, when there are shining virtues and minute defects; but when it appears that great vices are opposed in the same mind to as extraordinary virtues, such a character deserves contempt."

"Perhaps," cried he, "there may be some such monsters as you describe, of great vices joined to great virtues; yet in my progress through life I never yet found one instance of their existence: on the contrary, I have ever perceived, that where the mind was capacious, the affections were good. And, indeed, Providence seems kindly our friend in this particular, thus to debilitate the understanding where the heart is corrupt, and diminish the power where there is the will to do mischief. This rule seems to extend even to other animals: the little vermin race are ever treacherous, cruel, and cowardly, whilst those endowed with strength and power, are generous, brave, and gentle."

"These observations sound well," returned I, "and yet it would be easy this moment to point out a man," and I fixed my eye steadfastly upon him, "whose head and heart form a most detestable contrast. Ay, sir," continued I, raising my voice, "and I am glad to have this opportunity of detecting him in the midst of his fancied security. Do you know this, sir, this pocket-book?"——"Yes, sir," returned he, with a face of impenetrable assurance, "that pocket-book is mine, and I am glad you have found it."——"And do you know," cried I, "this letter? Nay, never falter, man; but look me full in the face; I say, do you know this letter?"——"That letter,"—returned he, "yes, it was I that wrote that letter."—"And how could you," said I,

Digitized by Google

"so basely, so ungratefully presume to write this letter?"—"And how came you," replied he, with looks of unparalleled effrontery, "so basely to presume to break open this letter? Don't you know, now, I could hang you all for this? All that I have to do is to swear at the next justice's, that you have been guilty of breaking open the lock of my pocket-book, and so hang you all up at this door." This piece of unexpected insolence raised me to such a pitch, that I could scarcely govern my passion. "Ungrateful wretch, begone, and no longer pollute my dwelling with thy baseness: begone, and never let me see thee again; go from my doors, and the only punishment I wish thee is an alarmed conscience, which will be a sufficient tormentor!" So saying I threw him his pocket-book, which he took up with a smile, and shutting the clasps with the utmost composure, left us, quite astonished at the serenity of his assurance. My wife was particularly enraged that nothing could make him angry, or make him seem ashamed of his villainies. "My dear," cried I, willing to calm those passions that had been raised too high among us, "we are not to be surprised that bad men want shame; they only blush at being detected in doing good, but glory in their vices.

"Guilt and shame, says the allegory, were at first companions, and in the beginning of their journey inseparably kept together. But their union was soon found to be disagreeable and inconvenient to both; Guilt gave Shame frequent uneasiness, and Shame often betrayed the secret conspiracies of Guilt. After long disagreement, therefore, they at length consented to part for ever. Guilt boldly walked forward alone, to overtake Fate, that went before in the shape of an executioner: but Shame being naturally timorous, returned back to keep company with Virtue, which, in the beginning of their journey, they had left behind. Thus my children, after men have travelled through a few stages

Digitized by Google

in vice, Shame forsakes them, and returns back to wait upon the few virtues they have still remaining."*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FAMILY USE ART, WHICH IS OPPOSED WITH STILL GREATER.

Whatever might have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family was easily consoled for Mr. Burchell's absence by the company of our landlord, whose visits now became more frequent and longer. Though he had been disappointed in procuring my daughters the amusements of the town as he designed, he took every opportunity of supplying them with those little recreations which our retirement would admit of. He usually came in the morning, and while my son and I followed our occupations abroad, he sat with the family at home, and amused them by describing the town, with every part of which he was particularly acquainted. He could repeat all the observations that were retailed in the atmosphere of the play-houses, and had all the good things of the high wits by rote long before they made their way into the jest books. The intervals between conversation were employed in teaching my daughters piquet, or sometimes in setting my two little ones to box to make them *sharp*, as he called it: but the hopes of having him for a son-in-law, in some measure blinded us to all his imperfections. It must be owned that my wife laid a thousand schemes to entrap him; or to speak more tenderly, used every art to magnify the merit of her daughter. If the cakes at tea eat short and crisp, they were made by Olivia; if the gooseberry wine was well knit, the gooseberries

* [" They no longer continue to have shame at doing evil, and shame attends only upon their virtues."—*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

were of her gathering: it was her fingers which gave the pickles their peculiar green; and in the composition of a pudding, it was her judgment that mixed the ingredients. Then the poor woman would sometimes tell the 'Squire, that she thought him and Olivia extremely of a size, and would bid both stand up to see which was tallest. These instances of cunning, which she thought impenetrable, yet which every body saw through, were very pleasing to our benefactor, who gave every day some new proofs of his passion, which, though they had not arisen to proposals of marriage, yet we thought fell but little short of it; and his slowness was attributed sometimes to native bashfulness, and sometimes to his fear of offending his uncle. An occurrence, however, which happened soon after, put it beyond a doubt that he designed to become of one of our family; my wife even regarded it as an absolute promise.

My wife and daughters happening to return a visit to neighbor Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by a limner, who travelled the country, and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having, therefore, engaged the limner, (for what could I do?) our next deliberation was, to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbor's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style, and, after many debates, at length came to an unanimous resolution of being drawn together in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel; for all families of

Digitized by Google

any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was desired not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side, while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be dressed out with a hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the 'Squire, that he insisted on being put in as one of the family, in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication of his desire to be introduced into the family, nor could we refuse his request. The painter was therefore set to work, and, as he wrought with assiduity and expedition, in less than four days the whole was completed. The piece was large, and it must be owned he did not spare his colors; for which my wife gave him great encomiums. We were all perfectly satisfied with his performance; but an unfortunate circumstance which had not occurred till the picture was finished, now struck us with dismay. It was so very large that we had no place in the house to fix it. How we all came to disregard so material a point is inconceivable; but certain it is, we had all been greatly remiss. The picture, therefore, instead of gratifying our vanity, as we hoped, leaned, in a most mortifying manner, against the kitchen wall, where the canvas was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors, and the jest of all our neighbors. One compared it to Robinson Crusoe's long-boat, too large to be removed; another thought it more resembled a reel in a

Digitized by Google

bottle; some wondered how it could be got out, but still more were amazed how it ever got in.

But though it excited the ridicule of some, it effectually raised more malicious suggestions in many. The 'Squire's portrait being found united with ours, was an honor too great to escape envy. Scandalous whispers began to circulate at our expense, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies. These reports we always resented with becoming spirit; but scandal ever improves by opposition.

We once again, therefore, entered into a consultation upon obviating the malice of our enemies, and at last came to a resolution which had too much cunning to give me entire satisfaction. It was this: as our principal object was to discover the honor of Mr. Thornhill's addresses, my wife undertook to sound him, by pretending to ask his advice in the choice of a husband for her eldest daughter. If this was not found sufficient to induce him to a declaration, it was then resolved to terrify him with a rival. To this last step, however, I would by no means give my consent, till Olivia gave me the most solemn assurances that she would marry the person provided to rival him upon this occasion, if he did not prevent it by taking her himself. Such was the scheme laid, which, though I did not strenuously oppose, I did not entirely approve.

The next time, therefore, that Mr. Thornhill came to see us, my girls took care to be out of the way, in order to give their mamma an opportunity of putting her scheme in execution; but they only retired to the next room, whence they could overhear the whole conversation. My wife artfully introduced it by observing, that one of the Miss Flamboroughs was like to have a very good match of it in Mr. Spanker. To this the 'Squire assenting, she proceeded to remark, that they who had warm for-

Digitized by Google

tunes were always sure of getting good husbands: "But Heaven help," continued she, "the girls that have none. What signifies beauty, Mr. Thornhill? or what signifies all the virtue, and all the qualifications in the world, in this age of self-interest? It is not what is she? but what has she? is all the cry."

"Madam," returned he, "I highly approve the justice, as well as the novelty, of your remarks; and if I were a king, it should be otherwise. It should then, indeed, be fine times with the girls without fortunes: our two young ladies should be the first for whom I would provide."

"Ah, sir," returned my wife, "you are pleased to be facetious: but I wish I were a queen, and then I know where my eldest daughter should look for a husband. But, now that you have put it into my head, seriously, Mr. Thornhill, can't you recommend me a proper husband for her? She is now nineteen years old, well grown and well educated, and, in my humble opinion, does not want for parts."

"Madam," replied he, "if I were to choose, I would find out a person possessed of every accomplishment that can make an angel happy. One with prudence, fortune, taste, and sincerity; such, madam," would be, in my opinion, the proper husband." "Ay, sir," said she, "but do you know of any such person?"— "No, madam," returned he, "it is impossible to know any person that deserves to be her husband: she's too great a treasure for one man's possession: she's a goddess. Upon my soul, I speak what I think, she's an angel."——"Ah, Mr. Thornhill, you only flatter my poor girl: but we have been thinking of marrying her to one of your tenants, whose mother is lately dead, and who wants a manager: you know whom I mean, farmer Williams; a warm man, Mr. Thornhill, able to give her good bread; and who has several times made her proposals" (which was actually the case): "but, sir," concluded she, "I should be glad to have your

Digitized by Google

approbation of our choice."——"How, madam," replied he, "my approbation! My approbation of such a choice! Never. What! sacrifice so much beauty, and sense, and goodness, to a creature insensible of the blessing! Excuse me, I can never approve of such a piece of injustice! And I have my reasons!"——"Indeed, sir," cried Deborah, "if you have your reasons, that's another affair; but I should be glad to know those reasons."—"Excuse me, madam," returned he, "they lie too deep for discovery" (laying his hand upon his bosom): "they remain buried, riveted here."

After he was gone, upon general consultation, we could not tell what to make of these fine sentiments. Olivia considered them as instances of the most exalted passion; but I was not quite so sanguine: it seemed to me pretty plain, that they had more of love than matrimony in them: yet, whatever they might portend, it was resolved to prosecute the scheme of farmer Williams, who, from my daughter's first appearance in the country, had paid her his addresses.

CHAPTER XVII.

SCARCELY ANY VIRTUE FOUND TO RESIST THE POWER OF LONG AND PLEASING TEMPTATION.

As I only studied my child's real happiness, the assiduity of Mr. Williams pleased me, as he was in easy circumstances, prudent, and sincere. It required but very little encouragement to revive his former passion; so that in an evening or two he and Mr. Thornhill met at our house, and surveyed each other for some time with looks of anger; but Williams owed his landlord no rent, and little regarded his indignation. Olivia, on her side, acted the coquette to perfection, if that might be called acting

Digitized by Google

which was her real character, pretending to lavish all her tenderness on her new lover. Mr. Thornhill appeared quite dejected at this preference, and with a pensive air took leave, though I own it puzzled me to find him so much in pain as he appeared to be, when he had it in his power so easily to remove the cause, by declaring an honorable passion. But whatever uneasiness he seemed to endure, it could easily be perceived that Olivia's anguish was still greater. After any of these interviews between her lovers, of which there were several, she usually retired to solitude, and there indulged her grief. It was in such a situation I found her one evening, after she had been for some time supporting a fictitious gayety.—"You now see, my child," said I, "that your confidence in Mr. Thornhill's passion was all a dream: he permits the rivalry of another, every way his inferior, though he knows it lies in his power to secure you to himself by a candid declaration."—"Yes, papa," returned she, "but he has his reasons for this delay; I know he has. The sincerity of his looks and words convinces me of his real esteem. A short time, I hope, will discover the generosity of his sentiments, and convince you that my opinion of him has been more just than yours."—"Olivia, my darling," returned I, "every scheme that has been hitherto pursued to compel him to a declaration, has been proposed and planned by yourself, nor can you in the least say that I have constrained you. But you must not suppose, my dear, that I will ever be instrumental in suffering his honest rival to be the dupe of your ill-placed passion. Whatever time you require to bring your fancied admirer to an explanation shall be granted; but at the expiration of that term, if he is still regardless, I must absolutely insist that honest Mr. Williams shall be rewarded for his fidelity. The character which I have hitherto supported in life demands this from me; and my tenderness as a parent shall never influence my integrity as a man. Name, then, your day; let it

Digitized by Google

be as distant as you think proper, and in the mean time take care to let Mr. Thornhill know the exact time on which I design delivering you up to another. If he really loves you, his own good sense will readily suggest that there is but one method alone to prevent his losing you for ever."——This proposal, which she could not avoid considering as perfectly just, was readily agreed to. She again renewed her most positive promise of marrying Mr. Williams, in case of the other's insensibility; and at the next opportunity, in Mr. Thornhill's presence, that day month was fixed upon for her nuptials with his rival.

Such vigorous proceedings seemed to redouble Mr. Thornhill's anxiety: but what Olivia really felt gave me some uneasiness. In this struggle between prudence and passion, her vivacity quite forsook her, and every opportunity of solitude was sought, and spent in tears. One week passed away; but Mr. Thornhill made no efforts to restrain her nuptials. The succeeding week he was still assiduous, but not more open. On the third he discontinued his visits entirely; and instead of my daughter testifying any impatience, as I expected, she seemed to retain a pensive tranquillity, which I looked upon as resignation. For my own part, I was now sincerely pleased with thinking that my child was going to be secured in a continuance of competence and peace, and frequently applauded her resolution, in preferring happiness to ostentation.

It was within about four days of her intended nuptials, that my little family at night were gathered round a charming fire, telling stories of the past, and laying schemes for the future. Busied in forming a thousand projects, and laughing at whatever folly came uppermost, "Well, Moses," cried I, "we shall soon, my boy, have a wedding in the family; what is your opinion of matters and things in general?"—"My opinion, father, is, that all things go on very well; and I was just now thinking, that

Digitized by Google

when sister Livy is married to farmer Williams, we shall then have the loan of his cider-press and brewing-tubs for nothing." —"That we shall, Moses," cried I, "and he will sing us *Death and the Lady*, to raise our spirits, into the bargain."—"He has taught that song to our Dick," cried Moses, "and I think he goes through it very prettily."—"Does he so?" cried I, "then let us have it: where's little Dick? let him up with it boldly."—"My brother Dick," cried Bill, my youngest, "is just gone out with sister Livy; but Mr. Williams has taught me two songs, and I'll sing them for you, papa. Which song do you choose, *The Dying Swan*, or the *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog?*" "The elegy, child, by all means," said I; "I never heard that yet; and Deborah, my life, grief you know is dry, let us have a bottle of the best gooseberry wine, to keep up our spirits. I have wept so much at all sorts of elegies of late, that without an enlivening glass I am sure this will overcome me; and Sophy, love, take your guitar, and thrum in with the boy a little."

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG.

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song,
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

Digitized by Google

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighb'ring streets
The wond'ring neighbors ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied;
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

"A very good boy, Bill, upon my word, and an elegy that may truly be called tragical. Come, my children, here's Bill's health, and may he one day be a bishop."

"With all my heart," cried my wife; "and if he but preaches as well as he sings, I make no doubt of him. The most of his family, by the mother's side, could sing a good song: it was a commom saying in our country, that the family of the Blenkinsops could never look straight before them, nor the Hugginsons blow out a candle; that there were none of the Grograms but could

Digitized by Google

sing a song, or of the Marjorams but could tell a story."——
"However that be," cried I, "the most vulgar ballad of them all generally pleases me better than the fine modern odes, and things that petrify us in a single stanza; productions that we at once detest and praise. Put the glass to your brother, Moses. The great fault of these elegiasts is, that they are in despair for griefs that give the sensible part of mankind very little pain. A lady loses her muff, her fan, or her lap-dog, and so the silly poet runs home to versify the disaster."

"That may be the mode," cried Moses, "in sublimer compositions; but the Ranelagh songs that come down to us are perfectly familiar, and all cast in the same mould: Colin meets Dolly, and they hold a dialogue together; he gives her a fairing to put in her hair, and she presents him with a nosegay; and then they go together to church, where they give good advice to young nymphs and swains to get married as fast as they can."

"And very good advice too," cried I; "and I am told there is not a place in the world where advice can be given with so much propriety as there; for, as it persuades us to marry, it also furnishes us with a wife; and surely that must be an excellent market, my boy, where we are told what we want, and supplied with it when wanting."

"Yes, sir," returned Moses, "and I know but of two such markets for wives in Europe, Ranelagh in England, and Fontarabia in Spain. The Spanish market is open once a year, but our English wives are saleable every night."

"You are right, my boy," cried his mother, "Old England is the only place in the world for husbands to get wives."—"And for wives to manage their husbands," interrupted I. "It is a proverb abroad, that if a bridge were built across the sea, all the ladies of the Continent would come over to take pattern from ours; for there are no such wives in Europe as our own. But

Digitized by Google

let us have one bottle more, Deborah, my life, and Moses give us a good song. What thanks do we not owe to heaven for thus bestowing tranquillity, health, and competence! I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch upon earth. He has no such fireside, nor such pleasant faces about it. Yes, Deborah, we are now growing old; but the evening of our life is likely to be happy. We are descended from ancestors that knew no stain, and we shall leave a good and virtuous race of children behind us. While we live they will be our support and our pleasure here, and when we die they will transmit our honor untainted to posterity. Come, my son, we wait for a song: let us have a chorus. But where is my darling Olivia? That little cherub's voice is always sweetest in the concert."———

Just as I spoke Dick came running in, "O papa, papa, she is gone from us, she is gone from us, my sister Livy is gone from us for ever!"—"Gone, child!" "Yes, she is gone off with two gentlemen in a post-chaise, and one of them kissed her, and said he would die for her; and she cried very much, and was for coming back; but he persuaded her again, and she went into the chaise, and said, O what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!"——"Now, then," cried I, "my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more. And O may heaven's everlasting fury light upon him and his! Thus to rob me of my child! And sure it will, for taking back my sweet innocent that I was leading up to heaven. Such sincerity as my child was possessed of! But all our earthly happiness is now over! Go, my children, go, and be miserable and infamous; for my heart is broken within me!"—"Father," cried my son, "is this your fortitude?" "Fortitude, child! Yes, he shall see I have fortitude! Bring me my pistols. I'll pursue the traitor. While he is on earth I'll pursue him. Old as I am, he shall find I can sting him yet. The villain! The perfidious villain!"

Digitized by Google

I had by this time reached down my pistols, when my poor wife, whose passions were not so strong as mine, caught me in her arms. "My dearest, dearest husband," cried she, "the Bible is the only weapon that is fit for your old hands now. Open that, my love, and read our anguish into patience, for she has vilely deceived us."——"Indeed, sir," resumed my son, after a pause, "your rage is too violent and unbecoming. You should be my mother's comforter, and you increase her pain. It ill suited you and your reverend character, thus to curse your greatest enemy: you should no thave cursed him, villain as he is."—"I did not curse him, child, did I?"—"Indeed, sir, you did; you cursed him twice."—"Then may Heaven forgive me and him if I did. And now, my son, I see it was more than human benevolence that first taught us to bless our enemies! Blessed be His holy name for all the good he hath given, and for all that he hath taken away. But it is not, it is not a small distress that can wring tears from these old eyes, that have not wept for so many years. My child!—To undo my darling! May confusion seize ——Heaven forgive me, what am I about to say! You may remember, my love, how good she was, and how charming; till this vile moment all her care was to make us happy. Had she but died! But she is gone, the honor of our family contaminated, and I must look out for happiness in other worlds than here. But, my child, you saw them go off: perhaps he forced her away. If he forced her, she may yet be innocent."—"Ah no, sir!" cried the child; "he only kissed her, and called her his angel, and she wept very much, and leaned upon his arm, and they drove off very fast."——"She's an ungrateful creature," cried my wife, who could scarcely speak for weeping, "to use us thus. She never had the least constraint put upon her affections. The vile strumpet has basely deserted her parents without any provoca-

Digitized by Google

tion—thus to bring your gray hairs to the grave, and I must shortly follow."

In this manner that night, the first of our real misfortunes, was spent in the bitterness of complaint, and ill-supported sallies of enthusiasm. I determined, however, to find out her betrayer, wherever he was, and reproach his baseness. The next morning we missed our wretched child at breakfast, where she used to give life and cheerfulness to us all. My wife, as before, attempted to ease her heart by reproaches. "Never," cried she, "shall that vilest stain of our family again darken these harmless doors. I will never call her daughter more. No, let the strumpet live with her vile seducer: she may bring us to shame, but she shall never more deceive us."

"Wife," said I, "do not talk thus hardly: my detestation of her guilt is as great as yours; but ever shall this house and this heart be open to a poor returning repentant sinner. The sooner she returns from her transgression, the more welcome shall she be to me. For the first time the very best may err; art may persuade, and novelty spread out its charm. The first fault is the child of simplicity; but every other the offspring of guilt. Yes, the wretched creature shall be welcome to this heart, and this house, though stained with ten thousand vices. I will again hearken to the music of her voice, again will I hang fondly on her bosom, if I find but repentance there. My son, bring hither my Bible and my staff; I will pursue her, wherever she is, and though I cannot save her from shame, I may prevent the continuance of iniquity."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PURSUIT OF A FATHER TO RECLAIM A LOST CHILD TO VIRTUE.

Though the child could not describe the gentleman's person who handed his sister into the post-chaise, yet my suspicions fell entirely upon our young landlord, whose character for such intrigues was but too well known. I therefore directed my steps towards Thornhill-castle, resolving to upbraid him, and, if possible, to bring back my daughter: but before I had reached his seat, I was met by one of my parishioners, who said he saw a young lady resembling my daughter in a post-chaise with a gentleman, whom, by the description, I could only guess to be Mr. Burchell, and that they drove very fast. This information, however, did by no means satisfy me. I therefore went to the young 'Squire's, and, though it was yet early, insisted upon seeing him immediately: he soon appeared, with the most open, familiar air, and seemed perfectly amazed at my daughter's elopement, protesting upon his honor that he was quite a stranger to it. I now, therefore, condemned my former suspicions, and could turn them only on Mr. Burchell, who I recollected had of late several private conferences with her: but the appearance of another witness left me no room to doubt his villainy, who averred that he and my daughter were actually gone towards the Wells, about thirty miles off, where there was a great deal of company.

Being driven to that state of mind in which we are more ready to act precipitately than to reason right, I never debated with myself, whether these accounts might not have been given by persons purposely placed in my way to mislead me, but resolved to pursue my daughter and her fancied deluder thither. I walked along with earnestness, and inquired of several by the way; but received no accounts till, entering the town, I was met by a person on horseback, whom I remembered to have seen at the 'Squire's,

Digitized by Google

and he assured me, that if I followed them to the races, which were but thirty miles farther, I might depend upon overtaking them; for he had seen them dance there the night before, and the whole assembly seemed charmed with my daughter's performance. Early the next day I walked forward to the races, and about four in the afternoon I came upon the course. The company made a very brilliant appearance, all earnestly employed in one pursuit, that of pleasure; how different from mine, that of reclaiming a lost child to virtue! I thought I perceived Mr. Burchell at some distance from me; but, as if he dreaded an interview, upon my approaching him he mixed among a crowd, and I saw him no more. I now reflected that it would be to no purpose to continue my pursuit farther, and resolved to return home to an innocent family who wanted my assistance. But the agitations of my mind, and the fatigues I had undergone, threw me into a fever, the symptoms of which I perceived before I came off the course. This was another unexpected stroke, as I was more than seventy miles distant from home: however, I retired to a little alehouse by the road-side, and in this place, the usual retreat for indigence and frugality, I laid me down patiently to wait the issue of my disorder. I languished here for nearly three weeks; but at last my constitution prevailed, though I was unprovided with money to defray the expenses of my entertainment. It is possible the anxiety from this last circumstance alone might have brought on a relapse, had I not been supplied by a traveller, who stopped to take a cursory refreshment. This person was no other than the philanthropic bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard,* who has written so many little books for children: he called himself their friend; but he was the friend of all mankind. He was no sooner alighted, but he was in haste to be gone; for he was ever on business of the utmost importance, and was at that time actu-

* [Mr. John Newberry. See *Life*, ch. ix.]

Digitized by Google

ally compiling materials for the history of one Mr. Thomas Trip. I immediately recollected this good-natured man's red pimpled face; for he had published for me against the Deuterogamists of the age, and from him I borrowed a few pieces, to be paid at my return. Leaving the inn, therefore, as I was as yet but weak, I resolved to return home by easy journeys of ten miles a day. My health and usual tranquillity were almost restored, and I now condemned that pride which had made me refractory to the hand of correction. Man little knows what calamities are beyond his patience to bear till he tries them; as in ascending the heights of ambition, which look bright from below, every step we rise shows us some new and gloomy prospect of hidden disappointment; so in our descent from the summits of pleasure, though the vale of misery below may appear at first dark and gloomy, yet the busy mind, still attentive to its own amusement, finds as we descend something to flatter and to please. Still as we approach, the darkest objects appear to brighten, and the mental eye becomes adapted to its gloomy situation.

I now proceeded forward, and had walked about two hours, when I perceived what appeared at a distance like a wagon, which I was resolved to overtake; but when I came up with it found it to be a strolling company's cart, that was carrying their scenes and other theatrical furniture to the next village, where they were to exhibit. The cart was attended only by the person who drove it and one of the company, as the rest of the players were to follow the ensuing day. Good company upon the road, says the proverb, is the shortest cut, I therefore entered into conversation with the poor player; and as I once had some theatrical powers myself, I disserted on such topics with my usual freedom: but as I was pretty much unacquainted with the present state of the stage, I demanded who were the present theatrical writers in vogue, who the Drydens and Otways of the day.——"I fancy, sir,"

Digitized by Google

cried the player, "few of our modern dramatists would think themselves much honored by being compared to the writers you mention. Dryden's and Rowe's manner, sir, are quite out of fashion; our taste has gone back a whole century; Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and all the plays of Shakspeare are the only things that go down."——"How," cried I, "is it possible that the present age can be pleased with that antiquated dialect, that obsolete humor, those overcharged characters, which abound in the works you mention?"——"Sir," returned my companion, "the public think nothing about dialect, or humor, or character, for that is none of their business; they only go to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomime, under the sanction of Jonson's or Shakspeare's name."——"So then, I suppose," cried I, "that our modern dramatists are rather imitators of Shakspeare than of nature."——"To say the truth," returned my companion, "I don't know that they imitate any thing at all; nor indeed does the public require it of them; it is not the composition of the piece, but the number of starts and attitudes that may be introduced into it, that elicits applause. I have known a piece, with not one jest in the whole, shrugged into popularity, and another saved by the poet's throwing in a fit of the gripes. No, sir, the works of Congreve and Farquhar have too much wit in them for the present taste; our modern dialect is much more natural."

By this time the equipage of the strolling company was arrived at the village, which, it seems, had been apprised of our approach, and was come out to gaze at us; for my companion observed, that strollers always have more spectators without doors than within. I did not consider the impropriety of my being in such company till I saw a mob gather about me. I therefore took shelter, as fast as possible, in the first ale-house that offered, and being shown into the common room, was accosted by a very

Digitized by Google

well-dressed gentleman, who demanded whether I was the real chaplain of the company, or whether it was only to be my masquerade character in the play. Upon my informing him of the truth, and that I did not belong in any sort to the company, he was condescending enough to desire me and the player to partake in a bowl of punch, over which he discussed modern politics with great earnestness and interest. I set him down in my own mind for nothing less than a parliament-man at least; but was almost confirmed in my conjectures, when upon asking what there was in the house for supper, he insisted that the player and I should sup with him at his house, with which request, after some entreaties, we were prevailed on to comply.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON DISCONTENTED WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, AND APPREHENSIVE OF THE LOSS OF OUR LIBERTIES.

The house where we were to be entertained lying at a small distance from the village, our inviter observed, that as the coach was not ready, he would conduct us on foot, and we soon arrived at one of the most magnificent mansions I had seen in that part of the country. The apartment into which we were shown was perfectly elegant and modern; he went to give orders for supper, while the player, with a wink, observed that we were perfectly in luck. Our entertainer soon returned, an elegant supper was brought in, two or three ladies in easy dishabille were introduced, and the conversation began with some sprightliness. Politics, however, was the subject on which our entertainer chiefly expatiated: for he asserted that liberty was at once his boast and his terror. After the cloth was removed, he asked me if I had seen

Digitized by Google

the last Monitor; to which replying in the negative, "What, nor the Auditor, I suppose?" cried he. "Neither, sir," returned I. "That's strange, very strange," replied my entertainer. "Now, I read all the politics that come out. The Daily, the Public, the Ledger, the Chronicle, the London Evening, the Whitehall Evening, the seventeen Magazines, and the two Reviews; and though they hate each other, I love them all. Liberty, sir, liberty is the Briton's boast, and by all my coal mines in Cornwall, I reverence its guardians." "Then it is to be hoped," cried I, "you reverence the king." "Yes," returned my entertainer, "when he does what we would have him; but if he goes on as he has done of late, I'll never trouble myself more with his matters. I say nothing. I think only. I could have directed some things better. I don't think there has been a sufficient number of advisers: he should advise with every person, willing to give him advice, and then we should have things done in another guess manner."

"I wish," cried I, "that such intruding advisers were fixed in the pillory. It should be the duty of honest men to assist the weaker side of our constitution, that sacred power that has for some years been every day declining, and losing its due share of influence in the state. But these ignorants still continue the same cry of liberty, and if they have any weight, basely throw it into the subsiding scale."

"How," cried one of the ladies, "do I live to see one so base, so sordid, as to be an enemy to liberty, and a defender of tyrants? Liberty, that sacred gift of heaven, that glorious privilege of Britons!"

"Can it be possible," cried our entertainer, "that there should be any found, at present, advocates for slavery? Any who are for meanly giving up the privileges of Britons? Can any, sir, be so abject?"

"No, sir," replied I, "I am for liberty, that attribute of

Digitized by Google

Gods! Glorious liberty! that theme of modern declamation. I would have all men kings. I would be a king myself. We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal. This is my opinion, and was once the opinion of a set of honest men who were called Levellers. They tried to erect themselves into a community, where all should be equally free. But, alas! it would never answer; for there were some among them stronger, and some more cunning than others, and these became masters of the rest; for as sure as your groom rides your horses, because he is a cunninger animal than they, so surely will the animal that is cunninger or stronger than he, sit upon his shoulders in turn. Since, then, it is entailed upon humanity to submit, and some are born to command, and others to obey, the question is, as there must be tyrants, whether it is better to have them in the same house with us, or in the same village, or still farther off, in the metropolis. Now, sir, for my own part, as I naturally hate the face of a tyrant, the farther off he is removed from me, the better pleased am I. The generality of mankind are also of my way of thinking, and have unanimously created one king, whose election at once diminishes the number of tyrants, and puts tyranny at the greatest distance from the greatest number of people. Now the great, who were tyrants themselves before the election of one tyrant, are naturally averse to a power raised over them, and whose weight must ever lean heaviest on the subordinate orders. It is the interest of the great, therefore, to diminish kingly power as much as possible; because whatever they take from that is naturally restored to themselves; and all they have to do in the state, is to undermine the single tyrant, by which they resume their primeval authority. Now the state may be so circumstanced, or its laws may be so disposed, or its men of opulence so minded, as all to conspire in carrying on this business of undermining monarchy. For, in the first place; if

Digitized by Google

the circumstances of our state be such, as to favor the accumulation of wealth, and make the opulent still more rich, this will increase their ambition. An accumulation of wealth, however, must necessarily be the consequence, when, as at present, more riches flow in from external commerce than arise from internal industry; for external commerce can only be managed to advantage by the rich, and they have also at the same time all the emoluments arising from internal industry; so that the rich, with us, have two sources of wealth, whereas the poor have but one. For this reason, wealth, in all commercial states, is found to accumulate, and all such have hitherto in time become aristocratical.

"Again, the very laws also of this country may contribute to the accumulation of wealth; as when by their means the natural ties that bind the rich and poor together are broken, and it is ordained, that the rich shall only marry with the rich; or when the learned are held unqualified to serve their country as counsellors merely from a defect of opulence, and wealth is thus made the object of a wise man's ambition; by these means, I say, and such means as these, riches will accumulate. Now the possessor of accumulated wealth, when furnished with the necessaries and pleasures of life, has no other method to employ the superfluity of his fortune but in purchasing power; that is, differently speaking, in making dependents, by purchasing the liberty of the needy or the venal, of men who are willing to bear the mortification of contiguous tyranny for bread. Thus each very opulent man generally gathers round him a circle of the poorest of the people; and the polity abounding in accumulated wealth, may be compared to a Cartesian system, each orb with a vortex of its own. Those, however, who are willing to move in a great man's vortex, are only such as must be slaves, the rabble of mankind, whose souls and whose education are adapted to servitude, and who know nothing of liberty except the name.

Digitized by Google

"But, there must still be a large number of the people without the sphere of the opulent man's influence, namely, that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possessed of too large fortunes to submit to the neighboring man in power, and yet are too poor to set up for tyranny themselves. In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called the People. Now it may happen that this middle order of mankind may lose all its influence in a state, and its voice be in a manner drowned in that of the rabble; for if the fortune sufficient for qualifying a person at present to give his voice in state affairs, be ten times less than was judged sufficient upon forming the constitution, it is evident that greater numbers of the rabble will thus be introduced into the political system, and they, ever moving in the vortex of the great, will follow where greatness shall direct. In such a state, therefore, all that the middle order has left, is to preserve the prerogative and privileges of the one principal governor, with the most sacred circumspection. For he divides the power of the rich, and calls off the great from falling with tenfold weight on the middle order placed beneath them. The middle order may be compared to a town of which the opulent are forming the siege, and which the governor from without is hastening the relief. While the besiegers are in dread of an enemy over them, it is but natural to offer the townsmen the most specious terms; to flatter them with sounds, and amuse them with privileges; but if they once defeat the governor from behind, the walls of the town will be but a small defence to its inhabitants. What they may then expect, may be seen by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law. I am then for, and would die for, monarchy, sacred monarchy; for if there be any thing sacred amongst

Digitized by Google

men, it must be the anointed sovereign of his people; and every diminution of his power, in war or in peace, is an infringement upon the real liberties of the subject. The sounds of liberty, patriotism, and Britons, have already done much; it is to be hoped that the true sons of freedom will prevent their ever doing more. I have known many of those pretended champions for liberty in my time, yet do I not remember one that was not in his heart and in his family a tyrant."

My warmth I found had lengthened this harangue beyond the rules of good breeding: but the impatience of my entertainer, who often strove to interrupt it, could be restrained no longer. "What," cried he, "then I have been all this while entertaining a Jesuit in parson's clothes; but by all the coal mines of Cornwall, out he shall pack, if my name be Wilkinson." I now found I had gone too far, and asked pardon for the warmth with which I had spoken. "Pardon," returned he in a fury: "I think such principles demand ten thousand pardons. What, give up liberty, property, and, as the Gazetteer says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes! Sir, I insist upon your marching out of this house immediately, to prevent worse consequences, sir, I insist upon it." I was going to repeat my remonstrances; but just then we heard a footman's rap at the door, and the two ladies cried out, "As sure as death there is our master and mistress come home." It seems my entertainer was all this while only the butler, who, in his master's absence, had a mind to cut a figure, and be for a while the gentleman himself; and to say the truth, he talked politics as well as most country gentlemen do. But nothing could now exceed my confusion upon seeing the gentleman and his lady enter; nor was their surprise at finding such company and good cheer, less than ours. "Gentlemen," cried the real master of the house to me and my companion, "my wife and I are your most humble servants; but I protest this is so unexpected a

Digitized by Google

favor, that we almost sink under the obligation." However unexpected our company might be to them, theirs, I am sure, was still more so to us, and I was struck dumb with the apprehensions of my own absurdity, when whom should I next see enter the room but my dear Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was formerly designed to be married to my son George; but whose match was broken off as already related. As soon as she saw me, she flew to my arms with the utmost joy. "My dear sir," cried she, "to what happy accident is it that we owe so unexpected a visit? I am sure my uncle and aunt will be in raptures when they find they have the good Dr. Primrose for their guest." Upon hearing my name, the old gentleman and lady very politely stepped up, and welcomed me with most cordial hospitality. Nor could they forbear smiling upon being informed of the nature of my present visit: but the unfortunate butler, whom they at first seemed disposed to turn away, was at my intercession forgiven.

Mr. Arnold and his lady, to whom the house belonged, now insisted upon having the pleasure of my stay for some days, and as their niece, my charming pupil, whose mind in some measure had been formed under my own instructions, joined in their entreaties, I complied. That night I was shown to a magnificent chamber, and the next morning early Miss Wilmot desired to walk with me in the garden, which was decorated in the modern manner. After some time spent in pointing out the beauties of the place, she inquired, with seeming unconcern, when last I had heard from my son George. "Alas! madam," cried I, "he has now been nearly three years absent, without ever writing to his friends or me. Where he is I know not; perhaps I shall never see him or happiness more. No, my dear madam, we shall never more see such pleasing hours as were once spent by our fireside at Wakefield. My little family are now dispersing very fast, and poverty has brought not only want, but infamy upon us." The good-natured girl let fall a

Digitized by Google

tear at this account; but as I saw her possessed of too much sensibility, I forbore a more minute detail of our sufferings. It was, however, some consolation to me to find that time had made no alteration in her affections, and that she had rejected several offers that had been made her since our leaving her part of the country. She led me round all the extensive improvements of the place, pointing to the several walks and arbors, and at the same time catching from every object a hint for some new question relative to my son.

In this manner we spent the forenoon, till the bell summoned us in to dinner, where we found the manager of the strolling company that I mentioned before, who was come to dispose of tickets for the Fair Penitent, which was to be acted that evening, the part of Horatio by a young gentleman who had never appeared on any stage. He seemed to be very warm in the praises of the new performer, and averred, that he never saw any who bid so fair for excellence. Acting, he observed, was not learned in a day; "but this gentleman," continued he, "seems born to tread the stage. His voice, his figure, and attitudes are all admirable. We caught him up accidentally in our journey down." This account in some measure excited our curiosity, and, at the entreaty of the ladies, I was prevailed upon to accompany them to the play-house, which was no other than a barn. As the company with which I went was incontestably the chief of the place, we were received with the greatest respect, and placed in the front seat of the theatre; where we sat for some time with no small impatience to see Horatio make his appearance. The new performer advanced at last, and let parents think of my sensations by their own, when I found it was my unfortunate son! He was going to begin, when, turning his eyes upon the audience, he perceived Miss Wilmot and me, and stood at once speechless and immovable. The actors behind the scene, who

Digitized by Google

ascribed this pause to his natural timidity, attempted to encourage him; but instead of going on, he burst into a flood of tears, and retired off the stage. I don't know what were my feelings on this occasion; for they succeeded with too much rapidity for description; but I was soon awaked from this disagreeable reverie by Miss Wilmot, who, pale and with a trembling voice, desired me to conduct her back to her uncle's. When got home, Mr. Arnold, who was as yet a stranger to our extraordinary behavior, being informed that the new performer was my son, sent his coach and an invitation for him; and as he persisted in his refusal to appear again upon the stage, the players put another in his place, and we soon had him with us. Mr. Arnold gave him the kindest reception, and I received him with my usual transport; for I could never counterfeit false resentment. Miss Wilmot's reception was mixed with seeming neglect, and yet I could perceive she acted a studied part. The tumult in her mind seemed not yet abated: she said twenty giddy things that looked like joy, and then laughed loud at her own want of meaning. At intervals she would take a sly peep at the glass, as if happy in the consciousness of irresistible beauty, and often would ask questions without giving any manner of attention to the answers.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HISTORY OF A PHILOSOPHIC VAGABOND, PURSUING NOVELTY, BUT LOSING CONTENT.

After we had supped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the mova-

Digitized by Google

ble things upon this earth that he could boast of. "Why, ay, my son," cried I, "you left me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great deal of the world."——"Yes, sir," replied my son, "but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her; and indeed, of late I have desisted from the pursuit."—"I fancy, sir," cried Mrs. Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be amusing: the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but could the company prevail for the rest, it would be an additional obligation."——"Madam," replied my son, "I promise you the pleasure you have in hearing, will not be half so great as my vanity in repeating them; and yet in the whole narrative I can scarcely promise you one adventure, as my account is rather of what I saw than what I did. The first misfortune of my life, which you all know, was great; but though it distressed, it could not sink me. No person ever had a better knack at hoping than I. The less kind I found fortune at one time, the more I expected from her at another, and being now at the bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded, therefore, towards London in a fine morning, no way uneasy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds that carolled by the road, and comforted myself with reflecting, that London was the mart where abilities of every kind were sure of meeting distinction and reward.

"Upon my arrival in town, sir, my first care was to deliver your letter of recommendation to our cousin, who was himself in little better circumstances than I. My first scheme, you know, sir, was to be usher at an academy, and I asked his advice on the affair. Our cousin received the proposal with a true sardonic grin. Ay, cried he, this is indeed a very pretty career that has been chalked out for you. I have been an usher at a boarding-school myself; and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had

Digitized by Google

rather be an under-turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late: I was brow-beat by the master, hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business? No. Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys' hair? No. Then you won't do for a school. Have you had the small-pox? No. Then you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed? No. Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach? Yes. Then you will by no means do for a school. No, sir, if you are for a genteel easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a school by any means. Yet come, continued he, I see you are a lad of spirit and some learning, what do you think of commencing author, like me? You have read in books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at the trade: at present I'll show you forty very dull fellows about town that live by it in opulence. All honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and dully, and write history and politics, and are praised; men, sir, who, had they been bred cobblers, would all their lives have only mended shoes, but never made them.

"Finding that there was no great degree of gentility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept his proposal; and having the highest respect for literature, hailed the *antiqua mater* of Grub-street with reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a track which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I considered the goddess of this region as the parent of excellence; and however an intercourse with the world might give us good sense, the poverty she entailed I supposed to be the nurse of genius. Big with these reflections, I sat down, and finding that the best things remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book

Digitized by Google

that should be wholly new. I therefore dressed up three paradoxes with ingenuity. They were false, indeed, but they were new.* The jewels of truth have been so often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import, but some splendid things that, at a distance, looked every bit as well. Witness, you powers, what fancied importance sat perched upon my quill while I was writing! The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I sat self-collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer."

"Well said, my boy," cried I, "and what subject did you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt, go on; you published your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?"

"Sir," replied my son, "the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, sir. Every man of them was employed in praising his friends and himself, or condemning his enemies; and unfortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruellest mortification, neglect.

"As I was meditating one day in a coffee-house on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to enter the room, placed himself in the box before me, and after some preliminary discourse, finding me to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give to the world of Propertius, with notes. This demand necessarily

* ["I remember," said Dr. Johnson, "a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge: 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.' There was another fine passage too, which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over; for I found that generally what was new was false.'"—BOSWELL, vol. vii. p. 24.]

Digitized by Google

produced a reply that I had no money; and that concession led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were just as great as my purse, I see, cried he, you are unacquainted with the town; I'll teach you a part of it. Look at these proposals; upon these very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a dowager from her country-seat, I strike for a subscription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication fee. If they let me have that, I smite them once more for engraving their coat of arms at the top. Thus, continued he, I live by vanity, and laugh at it. But, between ourselves, I am now too well known; I should be glad to borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of distinction has just returned from Italy; my face is familiar to his porter; but if you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide the spoil."

"Bless us, George," cried I, "and is this the employment of poets now! Do men of their exalted talents thus stoop to beggary! Can they so far disgrace their calling, as to make a vile traffic of praise for bread?"

"O no, sir," returned he, "a true poet can never be so base; for wherever there is genius there is pride. The creatures I now describe are only beggars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every hardship for fame, so he is equally a coward to contempt, and none but those who are unworthy protection condescend to solicit it.

"Having a mind too proud to stoop to such indignities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a second attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a middle course, and write for bread. But I was unqualified for a profession where mere industry alone

Digitized by Google

was to insure success. I could not suppress my lurking passion for applause; but usually consumed that time in efforts after excellence which takes up but little room, when it should have been more advantageously employed in the diffusive productions of fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore come forth in the midst of periodical publications, unnoticed and unknown. The public were more importantly employed, than to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried among the essays upon liberty, eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog; while Philautos, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos all wrote better, because they wrote faster, than I.*

"Now, therefore, I began to associate with none but disappointed authors, like myself, who praised, deplored, and despised each other. The satisfaction we found in every celebrated writer's attempts, was inversely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could please me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source of comfort. I could neither read nor write with satisfaction; for excellence in another was my aversion, and writing was my trade.

"In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I was one day sitting on a bench in St. James's Park, a young gentleman of distinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the university, approached me. We saluted each other with some hesitation; he almost ashamed of being known to one who made

* [Goldsmith's own situation seems to be exactly and minutely described in the above passage. The allusions to having made one attempt for fame, meaning the 'Enquiry into Polite Learning'—to his being obliged afterwards to write for bread—to his passion for applause—to his efforts at acquiring an elegant style—scarcely admit of mistake; and the concluding complaint of the fate of his pieces is in nearly the words used in the preface to his Essays —See vol. i. p. 166, and *Life*, ch. ix.]

Digitized by Google

so shabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But my suspicions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was at the bottom a very good-natured fellow."

"What did you say, George?" interrupted I. "Thornhill, was not that his name? It can certainly be no other than my landlord."—"Bless me," cried Mrs. Arnold, "is Mr. Thornhill so near a neighbor of yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and we expect a visit from him shortly."

"My friend's first care," continued my son, "was to alter my appearance by a fine suit of his own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table, upon the footing of half-friend, half-underling. My business was to attend him at auctions, to put him in spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the left hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and to assist at tattering a kip, as the phrase was, when he had a mind for a frolic. Besides this, I had twenty other little employments in the family. I was to do many small things without bidding: to carry the cork-screw; to stand godfather to all the butler's children; to sing when I was bid; to be never out of humor; always to be humble, and, if I could, to be very happy.

"In this honorable post, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for the place by nature, opposed me in my patron's affections. His mother had been laundress to a man of quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the study of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was dismissed from several for his stupidity, yet he found many of them who were as dull as himself, that permitted his assiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it came awkward and stiff from me; and as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so every hour being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to

Digitized by Google

give it. Thus I was once more fairly going to give up the field to the captain, when my friend found occasion for my assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a duel for him, with a gentleman whose sister it was pretended he had used ill. I readily complied with his request, and though I see you are displeased at my conduct, yet as it was a debt indispensably due to friendship, I could not refuse. I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist, and soon after had the pleasure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a sharper. This piece of service was repaid with the warmest professions of gratitude; but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of serving me, but by recommending me to his uncle, Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinction, who enjoyed a post under the government. When he was gone, my first care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose character for every virtue was universal, yet just. I was received by his servants with the most hospitable smiles; for the looks of the domestics ever transmit their master's benevolence. Being shown into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon came to me, I delivered my message and letter, which he read, and after pausing some minutes, Pray, sir, cried he, inform me what you have done for my kinsman, to deserve this warm recommendation? But I suppose, sir, I guess your merits, you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me for being the instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance.——The severity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I knew it was just. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I found it no easy matter

Digitized by Google

to gain admittance. However, after bribing the servants with half my worldly fortune, I was at last shown into a spacious apartment, my letter being previously sent up for his lordship's inspection. During this anxious interval I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand and of happy contrivance: the paintings, the furniture, the gildings, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah, thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of a kingdom: sure his genius must be unfathomable! During these awful reflections I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah, this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be he! No, it was only the great man's valet de chambre. At last his lordship actually made his appearance. Are you, cried he, the bearer of this here letter? I answered with a bow. I learn by this, continued he, as how that— But just at that instant a servant delivered him a card, and without taking farther notice, he went out of the room and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure. I saw no more of him till told by a footman that his lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came like me, to petition for favors. His lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot door with large strides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which only I heard, the other half was lost in the rattling of his chariot wheels. I stood for some time with my neck stretched out, in the posture of one that was listening to catch the glorious sounds, till looking round me, I found myself alone at his lordship's gate.

"My patience," continued my son, "was now quite exhausted: stung with the thousand indignities I had met with, I was

Digitized by Google

willing to cast myself away, and only wanted the gulf to receive me. I regarded myself as one of those vile things that nature designed should be thrown by into her lumber room, there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, half a guinea left, and of that I thought fortune herself should not deprive me: but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it happened that Mr. Crispe's office seemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr. Crispe kindly offers all his majesty's subjects a generous promise of £30 a year, for which promise all they give in return is their liberty for life, and permission to let him transport them to America as slaves. I was happy at finding a place where I could lose my fears in desperation, and entered this cell, for it had the appearance of one, with the devotion of a monastic. Here I found a number of poor creatures, all in circumstances like myself, expecting the arrival of Mr. Crispe, presenting a true epitome of English impatience. Each untractable soul at variance with Fortune, wreaked her injuries on their own hearts: but Mr. Crispe at last came down and all our murmurs were hushed. He deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar approbation, and indeed he was the first man who for a month past talked to me with smiles. After a few questions, he found I was fit for every thing in the world. He paused a while upon the properest means of providing for me, and slapping his forehead as if he had found it, assured me, that there was at that time an embassy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own heart that the fellow lied; and yet his promise gave me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided my half guinea, one-half of which went to be added to his thirty thou-

Digitized by Google

sand pounds, and with the other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

"As I was going out with that resolution, I was met at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me that I was upon the very point of ruin in listening to the office keeper's promises; for that he only designed to sell me to the plantations. But, continued he, I fancy you might by a much shorter voyage be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam. What if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I'll warrant you'll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English, added he, by this time, or the deuce is in it. I confidently assured him of that; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He affirmed with an oath that they were fond of it to distraction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage short, and after having paid my passage with half my movables, I found myself, as fallen from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed myself, therefore, to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that in order to teach the Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection, is to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

"This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly

Digitized by Google

shipping back to England again; but falling into company with an Irish student who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turning upon topics of literature (for, by the way, it may be observed that I always forgot the meanness of circumstances when I could converse upon such subjects); from him I learned that there were not two men in his whole university who understood Greek. This amazed me. I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this design I was heartened by my brother student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got by it.

"I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burthen of my movables, like Æsop and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my services as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The *principal* seemed at first to doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: You see me, young man; I never learned Greek, and I don't find that I have ever missed it. I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek; and in short, continued he, as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it.

"I was now too far from home to think of returning; so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice, and now turned what was my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor

Digitized by Google

enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall, I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging but subsistence for the next day. I once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion; but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used in better days to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt; a proof how ready the world is to underrate those talents by which a man is supported.

"In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favorite. After walking about the town four or five days, and seeing the outsides of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality, when, passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but our cousin to whom you first recommended me! This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not displeasing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds, for a gentleman in London, who had just stepped into taste and a large fortune. I was the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a connoscento so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to

Digitized by Google

two rules: the one, always to observe the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino. But, says he, as I once taught you how to be an author in London, I'll now undertake to instruct you in the art of picture-buying in Paris.

"With this proposal I very readily closed, as it was living, and now all my ambition was to live. I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dress by his assistance, and after some time accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where the English gentry were expected to be purchasers. I was not a little surprised at his intimacy with people of the best fashion, who referred themselves to his judgment upon every picture or medal, as to an unerring standard of taste. He made very good use of my assistance upon these occasions; for when asked his opinion, he would gravely take me aside and ask mine, shrug, look wise, return, and assure the company that he could give no opinion upon an affair of so much importance. Yet there was sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance. I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion that the coloring of a picture was not mellow enough, very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish, that was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with great composure before all the company, and then ask if he had not improved the tints.

"When he had finished his commission in Paris, he left me strongly recommended to several men of distinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tutor; and after some time I was employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman's governor, but with a proviso, that he should always be permitted to govern himself. My pupil in fact understood the art of guiding in money concerns much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred

Digitized by Google

thousand pounds, left him by an uncle in the West Indies; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing passion: all his questions on the road were how money might be saved; which was the least expensive course of travel; whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when disposed of again in London. Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing he was ready enough to look at; but if the sight of them was to be paid for, he usually asserted that he had been told they were not worth seeing. He never paid a bill that he would not observe how amazingly expensive travelling was, and all this though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he inquired the expense of the passage by sea home to England. This he was informed was but a trifle compared to his returning by land, he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation; so paying me the small part of my salary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

"I now therefore was left once more upon the world at large; but then it was a thing I was used to. However, my skill in music could avail me nothing in a country where every peasant was a better musician than I; but by this time I had acquired another talent which answered my purpose as well, and this was a skill in disputation. In all the foreign universities and convents there are upon certain days philosophical theses maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if I may so express it, saw both sides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few: I found that monarchy was the best government for the poor to

Digitized by Google

live in, and commonwealths for the rich. I found that riches in general were in every country another name for freedom; and that no man is so fond of liberty himself as not to be desirous of subjecting the will of some individuals in society to his own.

"Upon my arrival in England, I resolved to pay my respects first to you, and then to enlist as a volunteer in the first expedition that was going forward; but on my journey down my resolutions were changed, by meeting an old acquaintance, who I found belonged to a company of comedians that were going to make a summer campaign in the country. The company seemed not much to disapprove of me for an associate. They all, however, apprised me of the importance of the task at which I aimed; that the public was a many-headed monster, and that only such as had very good heads could please it: that acting was not to be learnt in a day, and that without some traditional shrugs which had been on the stage, and only on the stage, these hundred years, I could never pretend to please. The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as almost every character was in keeping. I was driven for some time from one character to another, till at last Horatio was fixed upon, which the presence of the present company has happily hindered me from acting."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SHORT CONTINUANCE OF FRIENDSHIP AMONGST THE VICIOUS, WHICH IS COEVAL ONLY WITH MUTUAL SATISFACTION.

My son's account was too long to be delivered at once; the first part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the

Digitized by Google

general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the 'Squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candor; and after a short time, his presence served only to increase the general good humor.

After tea he called me aside to inquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding, that he had been since frequently at my house, in order to comfort the rest of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot or my son; and upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: "For at best," cried he, "it is but a divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine." We were here interrupted by a servant who came to ask the 'Squire in to stand up at country dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot were too obvious to be mistaken; and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr. Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week at the pressing instances of Mr. Arnold; but each day the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed

Digitized by Google

my son, Mr. Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone: the morning I designed for my departure, Mr. Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest having been sufficient to get an abatement of the other two. "As for this trifling piece of service," continued the young gentleman, "I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure." This was a favor we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily therefore gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest in the mean time another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning, therefore, our young soldier was early prepared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress, for Miss Wilmot actually loved him, he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all I had, my blessing. "And now, my boy," cried I, "thou art going to fight for thy country, remember how thy brave grandfather fought for his sacred king, when loyalty among

Digitized by Google

Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes, if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, my boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed, and unwept by those that love you, the most precious tears are those with which heaven bedews the unburied head of a soldier."

The next morning I took leave of the good family, that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr. Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good breeding procure, and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to Heaven to spare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public house by the roadside, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young 'Squire Thornhill, who the host assured me was hated as much as his uncle Sir William, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and after a fortnight or three weeks' possession, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world.

As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving that her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there, to which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. "Mr. Symonds," cried she, "you use me very ill, and I'll bear it no

Digitized by Google

longer. Here three parts of the business is left for me to do and the fourth left unfinished: while you do nothing but soak with the guests all day long, whereas if a spoonful of liquor were to cure me of a fever I never touch a drop." I now found what she would be at, and immediately poured her out a glass, which she received with a courtesy, and drinking towards my good health, "Sir," resumed she, "it is not so much for the value of the liquor I am angry, but one cannot help it, when the house is going out of the windows. If the customers or guests are to be dunned, all the burthen lies upon my back; he'd as lief eat that glass as budge after them himself. There now above stairs, we have a young woman who has come to take up her lodgings here, and I don't believe she has got any money by her over-civility. I am certain she is very slow of payment, and I wish she were put in mind of it."——"What signifies minding her," cried the host, "if she be slow she is sure."—"I don't know that," replied the wife: "but I know that I am sure she has been here a fortnight, and we have not yet seen the cross of her money."——I suppose, my dear," cried he, "we shall have it all in a lump!" —"In a lump!" cried the other, "I hope we may get it any way; and that I am resolved we will this very night, or out she tramps, bag and baggage."—"Consider, my dear," cried the husband, "she is a gentlewoman, and deserves more respect."———"As for the matter of that," returned the hostess, "gentle or simple, out she shall pack with a sassarara. Gentry may be good things where they take; but for my part I never saw much good of them at the sign of the Harrow."

Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs that went from the kitchen to a room over-head, and I soon perceived by the loudness of her voice and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonstrances very distinctly: "Out, I say, pack out this moment! tramp,

Digitized by Google

thou infamous strumpet, or I'll give thee a mark thou won't be the better for this three months. What! you trumpery, to come and take up an honest house, without cross or coin to bless yourself with? Come along, I say."——"O dear madam," cried the stranger, "pity me, pity a poor abandoned creature for one night, and death will soon do the rest."——I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.——"Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; though thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all."——"O my own dear,"—for minutes she could no more——"my own dearest good papa! Could angels be kinder! How do I deserve so much! The villain, I hate him and myself, to be a reproach to such goodness. You can't forgive me. I know you cannot."——"Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee! Only repent, and we both shall yet be happy. We shall see many pleasant days yet, my Olivia!"—"Ah! never, sir, never. The rest of my wretched life must be infamy abroad and shame at home. But, alas! papa, you look much paler than you used to do. Could such a thing as I am, give so much uneasiness? Surely you have too much wisdom to take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself."——"Our wisdom, young woman," replied I——"Ah, why so cold a name, papa?" cried she. "This is the first time you ever called me by so cold a name."—"I ask pardon, my darling," returned I; "but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one." The landlady now returned to know if we did not choose a more genteel apartment, to which assenting, we were shown a room where we could converse more freely. After we

Digitized by Google

had talked ourselves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched condition. "That villain, sir," said she, "from the first day of our meeting made me honorable though private proposals."

"Villain, indeed," cried I; "and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr. Burchell's good sense and seeming honor could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it."

"My dear papa," returned my daughter, "you labor under a strange mistake, Mr. Burchell never attempted to deceive me: instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who I now find was even worse than he represented him."—"Mr. Thornhill," interrupted I, "can it be?" "Yes, sir," returned she, "it was Mr. Thornhill who seduced me, who employed the two ladies as he called them, but who in fact were abandoned women of the town without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, you may remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr. Burchell's letter, who directed those reproaches at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat their intentions still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest friend."

"You amaze me, my dear," cried I; "but now I find my first suspicions of Mr. Thornhill's baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell me, my child, sure it was no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine?"

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "he owes all his triumph to the desire I had of making him, and not myself happy. I knew

Digitized by Google

that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed by a Popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust to but his honor." "What," interrupted I, "and were you indeed married by a priest, and in orders?"——"Indeed, sir, we were," replied she, "though we were both sworn to conceal his name."——"Why, then, my child, come to my arms again, and now you are a thousand times more welcome than before; for you are now his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can all the laws of man, though written upon tables of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connection."

"Alas! papa," replied she, "you are but little acquainted with his villainies; he has been married already by the same priest to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned."

"Has he so?" cried I, "then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him to-morrow."—"But, sir," returned she, "will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy?"—"My dear," I replied, "if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopped off to preserve the body. But in religion, the law is written and inflexible, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right; for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. And though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you, my dear, go on."

Digitized by Google

"The very next morning," continued she, "I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there told me every moment of the power of my charms, and this only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, sir, how his ingratitude stung me? My answer to this proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was going he offered me a purse, but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for awhile kept me insensible to the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to.

"Just in that interval a stagecoach happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my only aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I was set down here, where, since my arrival, my own anxiety and this woman's unkindness have been my only companions. The hours of pleasure that I have passed with my mamma and sister, now grow painful to me. Their sorrows are much; but mine is greater than theirs; for mine are mixed with guilt and infamy."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman, this has gone to her heart: but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII.

OFFENCES ARE EASILY PARDONED WHERE THERE IS LOVE AT BOTTOM.

The next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove by every persuasion to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country, through which we passed, to observe how much kinder Heaven was to us, than we to each other, and that the misfortunes of nature's making were very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections, and that during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world, showed her that books were sweet unreproaching companions to the miserable, and that if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house, and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage: however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frighted from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fireside with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive

Digitized by Google

I already felt my wife's tender embraces, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The laborers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-dog at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door: all was still and silent: my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep, and he perceiving the flames instantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out naked and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood with silent agony looking on as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be seen. O misery! "Where," cried I, "where are my little ones?"——"They are burnt to death in the flames," says my wife calmly, "and I will die with them." That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awakened by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. "Where, where are my children?" cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined; "Where are my little ones?" ——"Here, dear papa, here we are," cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatching them through the fire as

Digitized by Google

fast as possible, while just as I was got out, the roof sunk in. "Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they are, I have saved my treasure. Here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our little darlings a thousand times, they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and after some time began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched in a terrible manner. It was therefore out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbors were alarmed, and came running to our assistance; but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters' fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box with some papers that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbors contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our out-houses with kitchen utensils; so that by daylight we had another, though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honest next neighbor and his children were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay took place; having therefore informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one, and though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's

Digitized by Google

pride and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. "Ah, madam," cried her mother, "this is but a poor place you are come to after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive you."——During this reception the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply; but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress, wherefore assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with instant submission, "I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all: I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us, let us not therefore increase them by dissension among each other. If we live harmoniously together we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of Heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner than ninety-nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And this is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition, is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII.

NONE BUT THE GUILTY CAN BE LONG AND COMPLETELY MISERABLE

Some assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible, and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbors, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist at repairing my former dwelling. Honest Farmer Williams was not last among these visitors; but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter; but she rejected him in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for continuing, and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety now had taken strong possession of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for hers, collecting such amusing passages of history as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. "Our happiness, my dear," I would say, "is in the power of one who can bring it about a thousand unforeseen ways that mock our foresight. If exam-

Digitized by Google

ple be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing, historian

"Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment, which hung over the river Volturna, the child with a sudden spring leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprise, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but far from being able to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

"As the war was then carried on between the French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity, they were going at once to perpetrate those two extremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This base resolution, however, was opposed by a young officer, who, though their retreat required the utmost expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first caught his eye; her merit soon after his heart. They were married: he rose to the highest posts; they lived long together and were happy. But the felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent: after an interval of several years, the troops which he commanded having met with a repulse, he was obliged to take shelter in the city where he had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and the city at length was taken. Few histories can produce more various instances of cruelty, than those which the French and Italians at that time exercised upon each other. It was resolved by the victors upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners to death; but particularly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental in protracting the siege. Their determina-

Digitized by Google

tions were in general executed almost as soon as resolved upon. The captive soldier was led forth, and the executioner with his sword stood ready, while the spectators in gloomy silence awaited the fatal blow, which was only suspended till the general, who presided as judge, should give the signal. It was in this interval of anguish and expectation, that Matilda came to take her last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deploring her wretched situation and the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her distress; but with still stronger emotions when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her son, the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger. He acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed: the captive was set free, and all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty could confer on each, were united."

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter; but she listened with divided attention: for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt; and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the color of her wretchedness, when we received certain information, that Mr. Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot; for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity before me to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news only served to increase poor Olivia's affliction; such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat if possible the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr. Wilmot's, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss

Digitized by Google

Wilmot a letter intimating Mr. Thornhill's conduct in my family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church the Sunday before he was there, in great splendor, the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there, particularly the 'Squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

"Why let him if he can," returned I: "but my son, observe this bed of straw and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread; you have come home, my child, to all this, yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O, my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendor of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers

Digitized by Google

that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile."

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had farther to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of resolution: but appearances deceived me: for her tranquillity was the languor of overwrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness amongst the rest of the family, nor was I displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burthen them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus once more the tale went round, and the song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRESH CALAMITIES.

The next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season; so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honeysuckle bank: where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recall her sadness. But that melancholy which is excited by the objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept, and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty Olivia," cried she, "let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond

Digitized by Google

of, your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do child, it will please your old father." She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is to die.

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice from sorrow gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and making up to the place where I was still sitting, inquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. "Sir," replied I, "your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character: and there was a time when I would have chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to appear before me. But now your are safe; for age has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains them."

"I vow, my dear sir," returned he, "I am amazed at all this; nor can I understand what it means! I hope you don't think your daughter's late excursion with me had any thing criminal in it."

"Go," cried I, "thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanness secures you from my anger. Yet, sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne

Digitized by Google

this! And so thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honor for their portion."

"If she or you," returned he, "are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time, and what is more, she may keep her lover besides; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her."

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the soul and sting it into rage.——"Avoid my sight, thou reptile," cried I, "nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he would not suffer this; but I am old and disabled, and every way undone."

"I find," cried he, "you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But as I have shown you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard, nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expenses lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving* for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is

* [An Irish term, descriptive of the mode which a landlord in that country takes to enforce payment from a tenant; and with some others would sufficiently indicate the country of the writer, did we not otherwise know it.]

Digitized by Google

even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse."

"Mr. Thornhill," replied I, "hear me once for all: as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to; and though your friendship could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink me to the grave, yet would I despise both. Thou hast once wofully, irreparably deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine honor, and have found its baseness. Never more, therefore, expect friendship from me. Go, and possess what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches, health, and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity, and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt."

"If so," returned he, "depend upon it you shall feel the effects of this insolence, and we shall shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me."—Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with the apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference, which when known alarmed them not less than the rest. But as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and now I stood prepared to repel every new effort. Like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which however thrown still presents a point to receive the enemy.

We soon, however, found that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore entreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than

Digitized by Google

incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure. The terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

"Why, my treasures," cried I, "why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right! My duty has taught me to forgive him; but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown we can still retire to a charming apartment, when we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!"

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passge before the door. He had not been thus engaged long when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us, that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke they came in, and approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county jail, which was eleven miles off.

"My friends," said I, "this is severe weather on which you have come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and

Digitized by Google

I want clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow: but if it must be so————"

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious, and desired my son to assist his eldest sister, who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the meantime my youngest daughter prepared for our departure, and as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAPTER XXV.

NO SITUATION, HOWEVER WRETCHED IT SEEMS, BUT HAS SOME SORT OF COMFORT ATTENDING IT.

We set forward from this peaceful neighborhood and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had a horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other, while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell not for her own but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to jail while they had a

Digitized by Google

drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

"What! my friends," cried I, "and is this the way you love me! Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit! Thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me! Which is your ringleader? Show me the man that has thus seduced you. As sure as he lives he shall feel my resentment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet perhaps one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting."

They now seemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting any farther interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the jail.

Upon entering we put up at the inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment

Digitized by Google

strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations and various sounds of misery; but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamor. I was apprised of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison soon was filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

"How," cried I to myself, "shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy! I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy."

With such reflections I labored to become cheerful: but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting, therefore, in a corner of the jail in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up and sitting by me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it: for if good I might profit by his instruction; if bad he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense; but a thorough knowledge of the world as it is called, or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

"That's unfortunate," cried he, "as you are allowed here nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and as I have

Digitized by Google

been one myself in my time, part of my bed-clothes are heartily at your service."

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a jail in misfortunes; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, "That the sage ancient seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, Ton kosmon aire, ei dos ton etairon; and in fact," continued I, "what is the world if it affords only solitude?"

"You talk of the world, sir," returned my fellow-prisoner; "the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony or creation of the world has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world. Sanconiathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words, Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan, which implies"——"I ask pardon, sir," cried I, "for interrupting so much learning; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?" At this demand he only sighed. "I suppose you must recollect," resumed I, "one Dr. Primrose, from whom you bought a horse?"

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before.——"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Jenkinson, "I remember you perfectly well; I bought a horse, but forgot to pay for him. Your neighbor Flamborough is the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the next assizes: for he intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see," continued he, showing his shackles, "what my tricks have brought me to."

"Well, sir," replied I, "your kindness in offering me assistance when you could expect no return, shall be repaid with my

Digitized by Google

endeavors to soften or totally suppress Mr. Flamborough's evi dence, and I will send my son to him for that purpose the first opportunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will comply with my request, and as to my own evidence, you need be under no uneasiness about that."

"Well, sir," cried he, "all the return I can make shall be yours. You shall have more than half my bed-clothes to-night, and I'll take care to stand your friend in the prison, where I think I have some influence."

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before he appeared at least sixty.—"Sir," answered he, "you are little acquainted with the world; I had at that time false hair, and have learnt the art of counterfeiting every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah! sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that perhaps when you least expect it."

We were now prevented from further conversation by the arrival of the jailer's servants, who came to call over the prisoners' names, and lock them up for the night. A fellow also with a bundle of straw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my heavenly corrector, I laid myself down and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI.

A REFORMATION IN THE JAIL.—TO MAKE LAWS COMPLETE THEY SHOULD REWARD AS WELL AS PUNISH.

The next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bedside. The gloomy strength of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity, and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge the family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a small expense for his mother and sisters, the jailer with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

"Well," cried I, "my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears."

"No, papa," says Dick, "I am not afraid to lie any where where you are."

"And I," says Bill, who was yet but four years old, "love every place best that my papa is in."

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining sister's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: "And as for you, my son," continued I, "it is

Digitized by Google

by the labor of your hands we must all hope to be supported Your wages as a day-laborer will be fully sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength, and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes; for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare then this evening to look out for work against to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support."

Having thus instructed him and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality that invaded me on every side drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time, pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were laboring to make themselves a future and a tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness from my mind. It even here appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved therefore once more to return, and in spite of their contempt to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going therefore among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinson of my design, at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humor, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that

Digitized by Google

what I did might mend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, but might lose a great deal: "For be assured, my friends," cried I, "for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship, though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you? He has given you nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

"If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while then just to try how you may like the usage of another master, who gives you fair promises at least to come to him? Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in the world his must be the greatest who, after robbing a house, runs to the thief-takers for protection. And yet how are you more wise? You are all seeking comfort from one that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all; for they only decoy and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and what is worst of all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done."

When I had concluded I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture

Digitized by Google

next day, and actually conceived some hopes of making a reformation here; for it had ever been my opinion that no man was past the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr. Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family; for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson at the first interview therefore seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten, and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

"Alas, doctor," cried he, "these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this!"

"Why, Mr. Jenkinson," replied I, "thank heaven my children are pretty tolerable in morals, and if they be good it matters little for the rest."

"I fancy, sir," returned my fellow-prisoner, "that it must give you great comfort to have all this little family about you."

"A comfort, Mr. Jenkinson," replied I, "yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this life of wounding my happiness, and that is by injuring them."

"I am afraid then, sir," cried he, "that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here," looking at my son Moses, "one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven."

My son immediately recollected his voice and features though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand, with a smile forgave him. "Yet," continued he, "I can't help

Digitized by Google

wondering at what you could see in my face to think me a proper mark for deception."

"My dear sir," returned the other, "it was not your face, but your white stockings and the black ribband in your hair that allured me. But no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for me at last."

"I suppose," cried my son, "that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructive and amusing."

"Not much of either," returned Mr. Jenkinson. "Those relations which describe the tricks and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end.

"Indeed, I think from my own experience, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood; when but seven years old the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning that not one would trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbor Flamborough, and one way or another generally cheated him once a year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich, while I still continued tricksy and cunning, and was poor, without the consolation of being honest. However," continued he, "let me know your case, and what has brought you here; perhaps though I have not skill to avoid a jail myself, I may extricate my friends."

Digitized by Google

In compliance with this curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story and pausing some minutes, he slapped his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying he would try what could be done

---

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alleging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavors would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

"Excuse me," returned I, "these people, however fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to enrich the giver's bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them I will; perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, and that will be great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?"

Thus saying I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my

Digitized by Google

arrival; and each prepared with some jail trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry amen in such an affected tone, as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slily picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dexterously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do, but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling, and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day: a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less

Digitized by Google

than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which inclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives to virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state: nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shown a disregard for the life of another. Against such, all nature arises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If, then, I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life any more than to take it away, as it is not his own. And beside, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling convenience, since it is far better that two men should live, than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men, is

Digitized by Google

equally so between a hundred, or a hundred thousand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that reason speaks, and untutored nature says the same thing. Savages that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarcely any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased, as if the more enormous our wealth the more extensive our fears, all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year, than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When, by indiscriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished, then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting

Digitized by Google

away wretches as useless before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant of the people. We should then find that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we should then find that creatures now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HAPPINESS AND MISERY RATHER THE RESULT OF PRUDENCE THAN OF VIRTUE IN THIS LIFE.—TEMPORAL EVILS OR FELICITIES BEING REGARDED BY HEAVEN AS THINGS MERELY IN THEMSELVES TRIFLING, AND UNWORTHY ITS CARE IN THE DISTRIBUTION.

I had now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since my arrival been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

* [This just and philosophical view of our penal code has at length, after the lapse of many years, made some way in public opinion, and mitigated the rigor of several former enactments.]

Digitized by Google

"I am glad to see thee, my dear," cried I; "but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child, and we yet may see happier days."

"You have ever, sir," replied she, "been kind to me, and it adds to my pain that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for me here; and I long to be rid of a place where I have only found distress. Indeed, sir, I wish you would make a proper submission to Mr. Thornhill; it may, in some measure, induce him to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying."

"Never, child," replied I, "never will I be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute; for though the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am no way miserable in this place, however dismal it may seem, and be assured that while you continue to bless me by living, he shall never have my consent to make you more wretched by marrying another."

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission, which promised to give me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family was not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. "Beside," added he, "I don't know if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent to a match you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy."

"Sir," replied I, "you are unacquainted with the man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that no submission I can make could procure me liberty even for an hour. I am told that even in this very room a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for

Digitized by Google

want. But though my submission and approbation could transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of; yet I would grant neither, as something whispers me that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for a union. No, villain as he is, I should then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now, should I not be the most cruel of all fathers to sign an instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself; and thus to escape one pang, break my child's heart with a thousand ?"

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer, but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. "However," continued he, "though you refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no objections to laying your case before the uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom for every thing that is just and good. I would advise you to send him a letter by the post, intimating all his nephew's ill usage, and my life for it, that in three days you shall have an answer." I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying; but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions: however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days I was in a state of anxiety to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the mean time was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here, and every hour received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but I received no answer to my letter: the complaints of a stranger against a favorite nephew

Digitized by Google

were no way likely to succeed; so that these hopes soon vanished like all my former. My mind, however, still supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health, and my arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and while I was stretched on my straw read to me by turns, or listened and wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health declined faster than mine: every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven! Another account came. She was expiring, and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow prisoner some time after came with the last account. He bade me be patient. She was dead!——The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They entreated to read to me, and bade me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. "And is not my sister an angel now, papa?" cried the eldest, "and why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel out of this frightful place, if my papa were with me." "Yes," added my youngest darling, "heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this, and there are none but good people there, and the people here are very bad."

Mr. Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle by observing that now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any

Digitized by Google

pride or resentment of my own, to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

"Heaven be praised," replied I, "there is no pride left me now; I should detest my own heart if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, sir, I have no resentment now, and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage, and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him any injury, I am sorry for it."

Mr. Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up in the humblest manner and delivered the letter, which, when Mr. Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

Digitized by Google

"Well, sir," said I to my fellow prisoner, "you now discover the temper of the man that oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it; this expectation cheers my afflictions, and though I leave a helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them for the sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their heavenly father."

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. "Why, my love," cried I, "why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? What though no submissions can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more." "We have indeed lost," returned she, "a darling child. My Sophia, my dearest, is gone, snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!"

"How, madam!" cried my fellow prisoner, "Miss Sophia carried off by villains? sure it cannot be!"

She could only answer with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoner's wives who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account; she informed us that as my wife, my daughter, and herself were taking a walk together on the great road a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them and instantly stopped. Upon which, a well dressed man, but not Mr. Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and forcing her in, bid the postillion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the sum of my miseries is made up, nor is

Digitized by Google

it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not to leave me one! the monster! the child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave me one!"

"Alas! my husband," said my wife, "you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our distresses are great; but I could bear this and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you."

My son, who was present, endeavored to moderate her grief; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful.——"My child," cried I, "look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out; while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave!"——"My dear father," returned he, "I hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction, for I have a letter from my brother George."——"What of him, child," interrupted I, "does he know our misery? I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers?"——"Yes, sir," returned he; "he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news; he is the favorite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenancy that becomes vacant!"

"And are you sure of all this," cried my wife, "are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my boy?"——"Nothing indeed, madam," returned my son; "you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure; and if any thing can procure you comfort I am sure that will."——"But are you sure," still repeated she, "that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?"——"Yes, madam," replied he, "it is certainly his, and he will one day be the credit and the support of our family!"——"Then I thank Providence," cried she, "that my last letter

Digitized by Google

to him has miscarried.—Yes, my dear," continued she, turning to me, "I will now confess, that though the hand of Heaven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been favorable here. By the last letter I wrote my son, which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired him, upon his mother's blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But thanks be to him that directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest." "Woman," cried I, "thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulf hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin. Providence indeed has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stripped of every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to protect his brothers and sisters. But what sisters has he left? he has no sisters now, they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone."—— "Father," interrupted my son, "I beg you will give me leave to read this letter, I know it will please you." Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows:

"Honored Sir,

"I have called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fireside at home. My fancy draws that harmless group as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight, which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress! But whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to

Digitized by Google

it to hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way happy here.

"Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to leave the kingdom; the colonel, who professes himself my friend, takes me with him to all companies where he is acquainted, and after my first visit I generally find myself received with increased respect upon repeating it. I danced last night with lady G———, and could I forget you know whom, I might be perhaps successful. But it is my fate still to remember others, while I am myself forgotten by most of my absent friends, and in this number I fear, sir, that I must consider you; for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter from home to no purpose. Olivia and Sophia, too, promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me. Tell them they are two arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment in a most violent passion with them: yet still I know not how, though I want to bluster a little, my heart is respondent only to softer emotions. Then tell them, sir, that after all, I love them affectionately, and be assured of my ever remaining

"Your dutiful son."

"In all our miseries," cried I, "what thanks have we not to return, that one at least of our family is exempted from what we suffer. Heaven be his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be the supporter of his widowed mother, and the father of these two babes, which is all the patrimony I can now bequeath him. May he keep their innocence from the temptations of want, and be their conductor in the paths of honor." I had scarcely said these words, when a noise like that of a tumult seemed to proceed from the prison below; it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons. I looked with

Digitized by Google

compassion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror when I found it was my own son.——"My George! My George! and do I behold thee thus? Wounded! Fettered! Is this thy happiness! Is this the manner you return to me! O that this sight could break my heart at once, and let me die!"—"Where, sir, is your fortitude?" returned my son, with an intrepid voice. "I must suffer, my life is forfeited, and let them take it."*

I tried to restrain my passions for a few minutes in silence, but I thought I should have died with the effort.——"O my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus, and I cannot help it. In the moment that I thought thee blest, and prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again! Chained, wounded. And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day. To see my children all untimely falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my children. May he live, like me, to see——"

"Hold, sir," replied my son, "or I shall blush for thee. How, sir, forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven, and fling those curses upward that must soon descend to crush thy own gray head with destruction! No, sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with hope and resolution, to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion."

"My child, you must not die: I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment. My George could never be guilty of any crime to make his ancestors ashamed of him."

"Mine, sir," returned my son, "is, I fear, an unpardonable

* ["It is my last happiness, that I have committed no murder, though I have lost all hopes of pardon."—*First. Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

one.* When I received my mother's letter from home, I immediately came down, determined to punish the betrayer of our honor, and sent him an order to meet me, which he answered not in person, but by dispatching four of his domestics to seize me. I wounded one who first assaulted me, and I fear desperately; but the rest made me their prisoner. The coward is determined to put the law in execution against me; the proofs are undeniable; I have sent a challenge, and as I am the first transgressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me with your lessons of fortitude, let me now, sir, find them in your example."

"And, my son, you shall find them. I am now raised above this world, and all the pleasures it can produce. From this moment I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my son, I will point out the way, and my soul shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our flight together. I now see and am convinced you can expect no pardon here, and I can only exhort you to seek it at that greatest tribunal where we both shall shortly answer. But let us not be niggardly in our exhortation, but let all our fellow prisoners have a share; good jailer, let them be permitted to stand here while I attempt to improve them." Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assembled themselves according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel; my son and his mother supported me on either side; I looked and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.

* ["I have sent a challenge, and that is death by a late Act of Parliament." —*First Edit.*]

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EQUAL DEALINGS OF PROVIDENCE DEMONSTRATED WITH REGARD TO THE HAPPY AND THE MISERABLE HERE BELOW.—THAT FROM THE NATURE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN, THE WRETCHED MUST BE REPAID THE BALANCE OF THEIR SUFFERINGS IN THE LIFE HEREAFTER.

"My friends, my children, and fellow sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for; but we daily see thousands who by suicide show us they have nothing left to hope. In this life then it appears that we cannot be entirely blest, but yet we may be completely miserable.

"Why man should thus feel pain, why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity; why, when all other systems are made perfect by the perfection of their subordinate parts, the great system should require for its perfection parts that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect in themselves; these are questions that never can be explained, and might be useless if known. On this subject Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

"In this situation, man has called in the friendly assistance of philosophy, and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them; and on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other; for if life is a place of comfort its shortness

Digitized by Google

must be misery, and if it be long our griefs are protracted. Thus philosophy is weak; but religion comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himself a heaven of happiness here, while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion then we must hold in every circumstance of life for our truest comfort; for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest. Thus to the fortunate religion holds out a continuance of bliss, to the wretched a change from pain.

"But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy; the sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our sacred law. The author of our religion every where professes himself the wretch's friend, and unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the forlorn. The unthinking have censured this as partiality, as a preference without merit to deserve it. But they never reflect, that it is not in the power even of Heaven itself to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miserable. To the first eternity is but a single blessing, since at most it but increases what they already possess. To the latter it is a double advantage; for it diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter.

"But Providence is in another respect kinder to the poor than the rich; for as it thus makes the life after death more desirable, so it smooths the passage there. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of sorrows

Digitized by Google

lays himself quietly down, without possessions to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure: he feels only nature's pang in the final separation, and this is no way greater than he has often fainted under before; for after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility.

"Thus Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life, greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage, and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man in the parable; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happiness, that he had once been wretched, and now was comforted; that he had known what it was to be miserable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

"Thus, my friends, you see religion does what philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing that it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter; and even though this should be called a small advantage, yet being an eternal one, it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intenseness.

"These are therefore the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects they are below them. They who would know the miseries of the poor, must see life and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is

Digitized by Google

only repeating what none either believe or practise. The men who have the necessaries of living are not poor, and they who want them must be miserable. Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can soothe the wants of nature, can give elastic sweetness to the dank vapor of a dungeon, or ease to the throbbings of a broken heart. Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us that we can resist all these. Alas! the effort by which we resist them is still the greatest pain. Death is slight, and any man may sustain it; but torments are dreadful, and these no man can endure.

"To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness in heaven should be peculiarly dear; for if our reward be in this life alone, we are then indeed of all men the most miserable. When I look round these gloomy walls, made to terrify, as well as to confine us; this light that only serves to show the horrors of the place, those shackles that tyranny has imposed, or crime made necessary; when I survey these emaciated looks, and hear those groans, O! my friends, what a glorious exchange would heaven be for these. To fly through regions unconfined as air, to bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss, to carol over endless hymns of praise, to have no master to threaten or insult us, but the form of Goodness himself for ever in our eyes: when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings; when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support; when I think of these things, what is there in life worth having? when I think of these things, what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

"And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly be if we but try for them; and, what is a comfort, we are shut out from many temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only

Digitized by Google

let us try for them and they will certainly be ours, and, what is still a comfort, shortly too; for if we look back on a past life it appears but a very short span, and whatever we may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration; as we grow older the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burthen laid by Heaven upon us; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and like the horizon still flies before him; yet the time will certainly and shortly come when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxuriant great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending."

CHAPTER XXX.

HAPPIER PROSPECTS BEGIN TO APPEAR.—LET US BE INFLEXIBLE, AND FORTUNE WILL AT LAST CHANGE IN OUR FAVOR.

When I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the jailer, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, ob serving that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to revisit me every morn ing. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones sat

Digitized by Google

by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person about two hours before in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighboring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarcely delivered this news, when the jailer came with looks of haste and pleasure to inform me that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news my dearest girl entered, and with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure.—"Here, papa," cried the charming girl, "here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety——" A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

"Ah, Mr. Burchell," cried I, "this is but a wretched habitation you now find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who under the mask of friendship has undone me."

"It is impossible," cried Mr. Burchell, "that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it!"

"It was ever my conjecture," cried I, "that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how hast thou been relieved, or who the ruffians were who carried thee away."

Digitized by Google

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "as to the villain who carried me off I am yet ignorant. For as my mamma and I were walking out, he came behind us, and almost before I could call for help, forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road, to whom I cried out for assistance, but they disregarded my entreaties. In the mean time the ruffian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out; he flattered and threatened by turns, and swore that if I continued but silent he intended no harm. In the mean time I had broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but your old friend Mr. Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name and entreated his help. I repeated my exclamation several times, upon which, with a very loud voice, he bid the postillion stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still greater speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, when in less than a minute I saw Mr. Burchell come running up by the side of the horses, and with one blow knocked the postillion to the ground. The horses when he was fallen soon stopped of themselves, and the ruffian stepping out with oaths and menaces drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr. Burchell running up shivered his sword to pieces, and then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I was at this time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in triumph. The postillion, who was recovered, was going to make his escape too; but Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to mount again and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed to me at least to be dangerous. He continued to complain of the pain as we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr. Burchell's

Digitized by Google

compassion, who at my request exchanged him for another at an inn where we called on our return."

"Welcome, then," cried I, "my child, and thou her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes. Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she is yours; if you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her, obtain her consent, as I know you have her heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you, sir, that I give you no small treasure; she has been celebrated for beauty it is true, but that is not my meaning, I give you up a treasure in her mind."

"But I suppose, sir," cried Mr. Burchell, "that you are apprised of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves?"

"If your present objection," replied I, "be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist; but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and if I could give her thousands, and thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice."

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal, and without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if he could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn, to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me. Adding with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once, and though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner, a table was lent us by the jailer, who seemed remarkably assiduous, the wine was disposed in order, and two very well-dressed dishes were brought in.

Digitized by Google

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow prisoner, might be admitted, and the jailer granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name were George, to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, "my son, though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand of friendship, he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance.—"My dear brother," cried his sister, "why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other."

He still continued his silence and astonishment, till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come foward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain phi-

Digitized by Google

losopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, "I again find," said he, "unthinking boy, that the same crime"—But here he was interrupted by one of the jailer's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.——"Bid the fellow wait," cried our guest, "till I shall have leisure to receive him;" and then turning to my son, "I again find, sir," proceeded he, "that you are guilty of the same offence, for which you once had my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that a contempt for your own life gives you a right to take that of another: but where, sir, is the difference between a duellist who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the gamester's fraud when he alleges that he has staked a counter?"

"Alas, sir," cried I, "whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who in the bitterness of her resentment required him upon her blessing to avenge her quarrel. Here, sir, is the letter, which will serve to convince you of her imprudence and diminish his guilt."

He took the letter and hastily read it over. "This," says he, "though not a perfect excuse, is such a palliation of his fault, as induces me to forgive him. And now, sir," continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, "I see you are surprised at finding me here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am now come to see justice done a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have long been a

Digitized by Google

disguised spectator of thy father's benevolence. I have at his little dwelling enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery, and have received that happiness that courts could not give, from the amusing simplicity round his fireside. My nephew has been apprised of my intentions of coming here, and I find is arrived; it would be wronging him and you to condemn him without examination: if there be injury there shall be redress; and this I may say without boasting, that none have ever taxed the injustice of Sir William Thornhill."

We now found the personage whom we had so long entertained as a harmless amusing companion was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarcely any were strangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country but loyal to his king. My poor wife recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah, sir," cried my wife, with a piteous aspect, "how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness; the slights you received from me the last time I had the honor of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I audaciously threw out; these jokes, sir, I fear can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he with a smile, "if you had your joke I had my answer: I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frighted my little girl here. I had not even time to examine the rascal's person so as to describe him in an adver-

Digitized by Google

tisement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you should know him again?"

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "I can't be positive; yet now I recollect he had a large mark over one of his eyebrows." "I ask pardon, madam," interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, "but be so good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair?"—"Yes, I think so," cried Sophia.—"And did your honor," continued he, turning to Sir William, "observe the length of his legs?"—"I can't be sure of their length," cried the Baronet, "but I am convinced of their swiftness; for he outran me, which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done."—"Please your honor," cried Jenkinson, "I know the man: it is certainly the same; the best runner in England; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcastle, Timothy Baxter is his name, I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. If your honor will bid Mr. Jailer let two of his men go with me, I'll engage to produce him to you in an hour at farthest." Upon this the jailer was called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. "Yes, please your honor," replied the jailer, "I know Sir William Thornhill well, and every body that knows any thing of him will desire to know more of him."——"Well, then," said the Baronet, "my request is, that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority, and as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you."——"Your promise is sufficient," replied the other, "and you may at a minute's warning send them over England whenever your honor thinks fit."

In pursuance of the jailer's compliance, Jenkinson was dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in and climbed up Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the

Digitized by Google

worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, "What, Bill, you chubby rogue," cried he, "do you remember your old friend, Burchell? and Dick, too, my honest veteran, are you here? you shall find I have not forgot you." So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession: this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the jailer himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honor in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honor; with which request the Baronet complied, and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FORMER BENEVOLENCE NOW REPAID WITH UNEXPECTED INTEREST.

Mr. Thornhill made his appearance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. "No fawning, sir, at present," cried the Baronet, with a look of severity, "the only way to my heart is by the road of honor; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed

Digitized by Google

a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son too, whom you feared to face as a man——"

"Is it possible, sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle could object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?"

"Your rebuke," cried Sir William, "is just; you have acted in this instance prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done: my brother indeed was the soul of honor; but thou—yes, you have acted in this instance perfectly right, and it has my warmest approbation."

"And I hope," said his nephew, "that the rest of my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I appeared, sir, with this gentleman's daughter at some places of public amusement; thus what was levity scandal called by a harsher name, and it was reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here, my attorney and steward can best inform you, as I commit the management of business entirely to them. If he has contracted any debts, and is unwilling or even unable to pay them, it is their business to proceed in this manner, and I see no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of redress."

"If this," cried Sir William, "be as you have stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offence; and though your conduct might have been more generous in not suffering this gentleman to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been at least equitable."

"He cannot contradict a single particular," replied the 'Squire, "I defy him to do so, and several of my servants are ready to

Digitized by Google

attest to what I say. Thus, sir," continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him, "thus, sir, my own innocence is vindicated; but though at your entreaty I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem, excite a resentment that I cannot govern. And this too at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life; this I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it; one of my servants has been wounded dangerously, and even though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it."

"Thou monster," cried my wife, "hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William will protect us, for my son is as innocent as a child; I am sure he is, and never did harm to man."

"Madam," replied the good man, "your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew persists—" But the appearance of Jenkinson and the jailer's two servants now called off our attention, who entered, hauling in a tall man very genteelly dressed, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter——"Here," cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, "here we have him: and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn this is one."

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink back with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him——"What, 'Squire," cried he, "are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter? but this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am re-

Digitized by Google

solved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honor," continued he, turning to Sir William, "has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be so dangerously wounded; he declares that it was Mr. Thornhill who first put him upon this affair, that he gave him the clothes he now wears to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in in the mean time, as if by accident, to her rescue, and that they should fight awhile, and then he was to run off, by which Mr Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself under the character of her defender."

Sir William remembered the coat to have been worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

"Heavens!" cried Sir William, "what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice too as he seemed to be. But he shall have it;, secure him, Mr. Jailer—yet hold, I fear there is not legal evidence to detain him."

Upon this, Mr. Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined.—"Your servants!" replied Sir William, "wretch, call them yours no longer; but come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called."

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his power was now over. "Tell me," cried Sir William sternly, "have you ever seen your master and that fellow dressed up in his clothes in company together?" "Yes,

Digitized by Google

please your honor," cried the butler, "a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies."—"How," interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, "this to my face!"——"Yes," replied the butler, "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind."——"Now then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his honor whether you know any thing of me."——"I can't say," replied the butler, "that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you were one of them."——"So then," cried Sir William, "I find you have brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches!" (But continuing his examination) "You tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter."—"No, please your honor," replied the butler, "he did not bring her, for the 'Squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them."—"It is but too true," cried Jenkinson, "I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned me, and I confess it to my confusion."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Baronet, "how every new discovery of his villainy alarms me. All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge. At my request, Mr. Jailer, set this young officer now your prisoner free, and trust to me for the consequences. I'll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate who has committed him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? let her appear to confront this wretch; I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Entreat her to come in. Where is she?"

"Ah, sir," said I, "that question stings me to the heart: I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries——" Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make

Digitized by Google

her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learnt from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her, which he did, and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on, without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous occurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives. How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed. The peasant must be disposed to labor, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishings to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill," cried she to the 'Squire, who she supposed was come here to succor and not to oppress us, "I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the

Digitized by Google

situation of a family so dear to us both: you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem, as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take pleasure in doing good in secret."

"He find pleasure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her. "No, my dear, his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison and the eldest son into fetters, because he had courage to face her betrayer. And give me leave, madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster."

"O goodness," cried the lovely girl, "how have I been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me for certain that this gentleman's eldest son, Captain Primrose, was gone off to America with his new-married lady."

"My sweetest miss," cried my wife, "he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor never was married. Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of any body else; and I have heard him say he would die a bachelor for your sake." She then proceeded to expatiate upon the sincerity of her son's passion, she set his duel with Mr. Thornhill in a proper light, from thence she made a rapid digression to the 'Squire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

"Good heaven!" cried Miss Wilmot, "how very near have I been to the brink of ruin! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me! He had at last art enough to persuade me that my promise to the only man I esteemed was no longer bind-

Digitized by Google

ing, since he had been unfaithful. By his falsehoods I was taught to detest one equally brave and generous!"

But by this time my son was freed from the incumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be wounded was detected to be an impostor. Mr. Jenkinson also, who had acted as his valet de chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now, therefore, entered, handsomely dressed in his regimentals, and, without vanity, (for I am above it,) he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favor. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarcely believe it real.—"Sure, madam," cried he, "this is but delusion! I can never have merited this! To be blessed thus is to be too happy."——"No, sir," replied she, "I have been deceived, basely deceived, else nothing could ever have made me unjust to my promise. You know my friendship, you have long known it; but forget what I have done, and as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated; and be assured that if your Arabella cannot be yours, she shall never be another's."—"And no other's you shall be," cried Sir William, "if I have any influence with your father."

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But in the mean time the 'Squire, perceiving that he was on every side undone, now

Digitized by Google

finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus laying aside all shame, he appeared the open hardy villain. "I find, then," cried he, "that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, sir," turning to Sir William, "I am no longer a poor dependent upon your favors. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The articles and a bond for her fortune are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and possessed of the one, let who will take the other."

This was an alarming blow; Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him. "Though fortune," said she, "is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give."

"And that, madam," cried her real lover, "was indeed all that you ever had to give; at least all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And I now protest, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your want of fortune this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity."

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped, and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He now saw that his money must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rascal; but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat

Digitized by Google

therefore for some minutes employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety.—"I must confess, sir," cried he, "that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence sufficient to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without fortune; they have long loved each other, and for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave then that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance."

"Sir William," replied the old gentleman, "be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continue to love this young gentleman, let her have him with all my heart. There is still, thank heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here (meaning me) give me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl, if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the first to join them together."

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required, which, to one who had such little expectations as I, war no great favor. We had now therefore the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport. "After all my misfortunes," cried my son George, "to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for. To be possessed of all that's good, and after such an interval of pain! My warmest wishes could never rise so high!"

"Yes, my George," returned his lovely bride, "now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O what an exchange have I made from the basest of men to the

Digitized by Google

dearest, best! Let him enjoy our fortune, I can now be happy even in indigence."——"And I promise you," cried the 'Squire, with a malicious grin, "that I shall be very happy with what you despise."——"Hold, hold, sir," cried Jenkinson, "there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it. Pray your honor," continued he to Sir William, "can the 'Squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?"——"How can you make such a simple demand?" replied the Baronet, "undoubtedly he cannot." "I am sorry for that," cried Jenkinson; "for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already."——"You lie, like a rascal," returned the 'Squire, who seemed roused by this insult; "I never was legally married to any woman."

"Indeed, begging your honor's pardon," replied the other, "you were; and I hope you will show a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife, and if the company restrains their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see her."——So saying, he went off with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design. ——"Aye, let him go," cried the 'Squire; "whatever else I have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs."

"I am surprised," said the Baronet, "what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humor, I suppose!"——"Perhaps, sir," replied I, "he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one more artful than the rest has been found able to deceive him. When we consider what numbers he has ruined, how many parents now feel with anguish the infamy and the contamination which he has brought into

Digitized by Google

their families, it would not surprise me if some one of them—— Amazement! Do I see my lost daughter! Do I hold her! It is, it is my life, my happiness. I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee—and still thou shalt live to bless me." The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine when I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures.

"And art thou returned to me, my darling," cried I, "to be my comfort in age!"——"That she is," cried Jenkinson, "and make much of her, for she is your own honorable child, and as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let the other be who she will. And as for you, 'Squire, as sure as you stand there, this young lady is your lawful wedded wife. And to convince you that I speak nothing but truth, here is the license by which you were married together."——So saying, he put the license into the Baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every respect. "And now, gentlemen," continued he, "I find you are surprised at all this; but a few words will explain the difficulty. That there 'Squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship, but that's between ourselves, has often employed me in doing odd little things for him. Among the rest, he commissioned me to procure him a false license and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But as I was very much his friend, what did I do but went and got a true license and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. Perhaps you'll think it was generosity that made me do all this. But no. To my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the license and let the 'Squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down whenever I wanted money." A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy reached even to the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathized,

Digitized by Google

And shook their chains
In transport and rude harmony.

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends and fortune at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps among all there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear-loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusion. "How could you," cried I, turning to Mr. Jenkinson, "how could you add to my miseries by the story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again is more than a recompense for the pain."

"As to your question," replied Jenkinson, "that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means of freeing you from prison, was by submitting to the 'Squire, and consenting to his marriage with the other young lady. But these you had vowed never to grant while your daughter was living; there was therefore no other method to bring things to bear but by persuading you that she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now."

In the whole assembly now there only appeared two faces that did not glow with transport Mr. Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him: he now saw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and after pausing a few moments, "Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude," cried he, "deserve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken, a bare competence shall be supplied to support the wants of life,

Digitized by Google

but not its follies. This young lady, thy wife, shall be put in possession of a third part of that fortune which once was thine, and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the future." He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the Baronet prevented him by bidding him not aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father; my wife too kissed her daughter with much affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honor. Our satisfaction seemed scarcely capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy in the looks of all except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. "I think now," cried he with a smile, "that all the company except one or two seem perfectly happy. There only remains an act of justice for me to do You are sensible, sir," continued he turning to me, "of the obligations we both owe Mr. Jenkinson; and it is but just we should both reward him for it. Miss Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy, and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune, and upon this I am sure they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? Will you have him?"——My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother's arms at the hideous proposal.—"Have him, sir!" cried she faintly. "No, sir, never."

Digitized by Google

——"What," cried he again, "not have Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor, a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds and good expectations!"——"I beg, sir," returned she, scarcely able to speak, "that you'll desist, and not make me so very wretched."—"Was ever such obstinacy known," cried he again, "to refuse a man whom the family has such infinite obligations to, who has preserved your sister, and who has five hundred pounds! What, not have him?——"No, sir, never," replied she angrily, "I'd sooner die first."——"If that be the case, then," cried he, "if you will not have him—I think I must have you myself." And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ardor. "My loveliest, my most sensible of girls," cried he, "how could you ever think your own Burchell could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress that loved him for himself alone? I have for some years sought for a woman, who, a stranger to my fortune, could think that I had merit as a man. After having tried in vain, even amongst the pert and the ugly, how great at last must be my rapture to have made a conquest over such sense and heavenly beauty." Then turning to Jenkinson, "As I cannot, sir, part with this young lady myself, for she has taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the recompense I can make is to give you her fortune, and you may call upon my steward to-morrow for five hundred pounds." Thus we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the same round of ceremony that her sister had done before. In the mean time Sir William's gentleman appeared to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left those gloomy mansions of sorrow. The generous Baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among the prisoners, and Mr. Wilmot, induced by his example, gave half that sum. We were received below by the shouts of the villagers, and I saw and

Digitized by Google

shook by the hand two or three of my honest parishioners who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarser provisions were distributed in great quantities among the populace.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alternation of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw, and leaving the company in the midst of their mirth, as soon as I found myself alone I poured out my heart in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as of sorrow, and then slept undisturbed till morning.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CONCLUSION.

The next morning as soon as I awaked I found my eldest son sitting by my bedside, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favor. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favor, he let me know that my merchant who had failed in town was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune. But I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinon was, that as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me that as he had the night before sent for the licenses, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company

Digitized by Google

happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned, and as I was by this time ready I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion, and read them two homilies and a thesis of my own composing, in order to prepare them. Yet they still seemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forsaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was which couple should be married first; my son's bride warmly insisted that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead; but this the other refused with equal ardor, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both with equal obstinacy and good breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest, and shutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have a mind to be married, and I think we had as good go back again; for I suppose there will be no business done here to-day."——This at once reduced them to reason. The Baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbor Flamborough and his family, by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr. Jenkinson gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses led up the other; (and I have since found that he has taken a real liking to the girl; and my consent and bounty he

Digitized by Google

shall have, whenever he thinks proper to demand them.) We were no sooner returned to the inn but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me, but among the rest were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity; but finding them quite disheartened by his harsh reproof, he gave them half-a-guinea apiece to drink his health and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr. Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides in quality of companion at a relation's house, being very well liked and seldom sitting at the side-table, except when there is no room at the other; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French-horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret; and she has even told me, though I make a secret of it, that when he reforms she may be brought to relent.

But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus, when we were to sit down to dinner our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides; but the debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed that the company should sit indiscriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who I could perceive was not perfectly satisfied, as she expected to have had the pleasure of sitting at the head of the table, and carving all the meat for the company. But notwithstanding this, it is impossible to describe our good-humor. I can't say whether we had more wit among us now than usual; but I am certain we

Digitized by Google

had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember: old Mr. Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, "Madam, I thank you." Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed that he was thinking of his mistress. At which jest I thought the two Miss Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fireside. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for; all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

END OF THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHIES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHIES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Digitized by Google

[This memoir, now first collected, appears, by a passage in a letter from Goldsmith to his brother, to have been written in 1759. "I know not," he says, "whether I should tell you—yet why should I conceal these trifles, or indeed any thing from you? There is a book of mine will be published in a few days, the life of a very extraordinary man; no less than the great Voltaire. I spent but four weeks on the whole performance, for which I received twenty pounds." Though announced for "speedy appearance" in the Public Advertiser, 7th February, 1759, it has not been discovered as a separate work, and is now printed from the Lady's Magazine for 1761; where it appeared in detached portions.—See *Life*, ch. viii.]

Digitized by Google

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

MEMOIRS

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE,

&c. &c.

That life which has been wholly employed in the study, is properly seen only in the author's writings; there is no variety to entertain, nor adventure to interest us in the calm anecdotes of such an existence. Cold criticism is all the reader must expect, instead of instructive history.

Voltaire, however, may be justly exempted from the number of those obscure philosophers whose days have been passed between the fireside and the easy chair. It is a doubt whether he appears more remarkable for the busy incidents of his life, or the fine productions of his retirement. If we regard the variety of his adventures, we shall be surprised how he had time to study; and if we look into his voluminous and spirited productions, we shall be apt to conclude that his whole employment was speculation. The truth is, no man can more truly be said to have lived. There is hardly a period of his existence which is not crowded with incidents that characterize either the philosopher or the man of the world. No poet was ever more universally

Digitized by Google

known than he: none more praised or more censured; possessed of more sincere friends or inveterate enemies.

François Marie Arouet de Voltaire was born at Châtenay, near Paris, the 20th of February, 1694. His family was but mean, as his father was the maker of his own fortune. François Arouet was at first a usurer; in which employment, by the most extreme parsimony, he saved as much as entitled him to follow the business of a public notary. Frugality in the lower orders of mankind may be considered as a substitute to ambition: this old man was a miser with no other view; and when his circumstances permitted, he purchased a place under the government of *greffier du chatelet;* which is equivalent to an under secretary with us. In this office he acquired a fortune of about £500 a year, and had interest sufficient to get his family ennobled, by having the title of DE added to the name of Voltaire.

Being therefore in easy circumstances, he was resolved to give his son the best education in his power, and accordingly, at the usual age, put him under the care of the celebrated Porée, who at that time professed rhetoric and philosophy in one of the colleges of Paris. Young Voltaire quickly discovered a capacity equal to any task, but at the same time an utter aversion to all that wore the appearance of study—enamored with poetry and eloquence, yet showing his love by feeble efforts to imitate, rather than by a fondness of reading the models proposed to his admiration. This dislike of learning the polite arts by precept, the manner in which they are generally taught, made him appear to his fellow-students as if endued but with a very ordinary capacity; nor did any of the assistant-masters view him in a light more advantageous. Porée, however, who was himself a man of genius, perceived in his pupil the sparks of latent fire, and saw with regret—for he loved the boy—that Voltaire was born a poet. To prevent his pursuing an employment that generally points to

Digitized by Google

misfortune, and which, at the greatest and best, is attended with painful pre-eminence, Porée thought proper to change the course of his pupil's studies. He deprived him of his favorite poets, Virgil and Sophocles, and put into his hands Euclid, Tully, and the system of Des Cartes, at that time much in fashion in France. But Voltaire seemed wound up to no other pursuit than that of poetry; he neglected severer studies, and was ridiculed for his backwardness in the sciences, by the whole university. The greatest genius can make no figure in philosophy without application; and application a young poet is ever averse to. The punishments of the academy, and the exhortations of his masters were insufficient to influence him; any thing that wore the face of industry he carefully avoided, and wherever pleasure presented, he was foremost in the pursuit. In conducting a boy of so refractory a disposition, other masters would have redoubled their punishments, or discontinued their care: but Porée, who perceived that all his attempts to thwart nature were to no effect, was at last resolved to indulge the genius of his pupil in his favorite pursuits, and to give that imagination a full liberty of dilating, which all his endeavors could not repress. "I perceive," said he, "that the youth will be miserable, in spite of all my efforts: he must be what nature has made him, a poet; let us then, since we cannot make him happy, endeavor to make him great."

And now the course of Voltaire's studies was changed once more; all the enchanting prospects of poetic ground, and all the invaluable treasures of antiquity, were opened before their youthful admirer. Few equalled, scarcely any excelled Porée in the proper methods of forming a poet. He exhibited to his pupil not only the finest models, but directed his efforts in imitating them; showed him that the true method of copying the ancients was to draw after nature, and instructed him from the copious volume of mankind; of which a long acquaintance with the

Digitized by Google

world had made him a perfect master. The whole college now began to turn their eyes with wonder upon a boy they had before considered in the most despicable light; and Voltaire seemed to glory in his conscious superiority. There were four prizes generally distributed in the year, to the most deserving in the Belles Lettres; he had obtained three, and missed the fourth; however, he was resolved to have all or none. Accordingly, rejecting the three which were offered him, he continued another year at college, until he should obtain the four, which he did with uncommon applause.

When he had passed the usual time at college, his father was resolved to remove him home; by which means he might at once have an opportunity of seeing the world, and finishing his education. The world was too dangerous a scene for a youth of passions as strong as his imagination; in love with pleasure, and as yet seeing human nature only on the pleasing side. But his father, either not considering, or regardless of these precautions, gave him an apartment in his own house, and indulged him, though but a boy of fifteen, in a degree of liberty which others are not allowed till a more advanced age. The truth is, the old man mistook his son's knowledge for prudence, and imagined that a lad so very wise in conversation would be equally so in action. In this he was deceived: Voltaire was a youth of exquisite sensibility, and men of such dispositions generally feel pleasure with a double relish; he had a constitution though not strong, yet delicately pliant, and such a disposition as inclined him to society. His visage, which was thin, might, at first view, have passed for indifferent; but when he spoke it caught ineffable graces, and his soul seemed beaming through his eyes. His stature was about middle size, and his person, upon the whole, not at all disagreeable. Thus furnished, our young poet launched out into all the excesses of refined debauchery. There

Digitized by Google

are in every great city a set of battered beaus, who, too old for pleasure themselves, introduce every young fellow of spirit into what they call polite company. A kept mistress, an actress, or an opera dancer, generally compose the society. These are all perfectly skilled in the arts of coquetting, teach the young beginner how to make love, set his features, adjust his bow, and—pick his pocket. Into such company as this Voltaire was quickly introduced; and they failed not, according to custom, to flatter him into a high opinion of his parts, and to praise his wit, though incapable of relishing its delicacy. Imagine a youth pleased with himself and every thing about him, taking the lead in all conversation, giving a loose to every folly that happened to occur, uttering things which, when spoken, seemed to please, but which, upon reflection, appeared false or trivial!—such was the gay, thoughtless, good-natured Voltaire, in a circle of close, designing beings, who approved his sallies from flattery and not from their feelings; who despised his efforts to please, or enjoyed his folly with tacit malignity. His father saw with concern the company into which he was fallen: he knew by experience that to be a wit was the surest means of banishing friends and fortune, and saw that his son, by striving after the character of an amusing member of society, was giving up all pretensions of being a useful one. Admonition he thought might be serviceable, and accordingly he remonstrated very freely upon Voltaire's behavior. No youth could receive advice with a better grace than he, or make more faithful promises of amendment. But he was now fallen in love with Mademoiselle G——n, the actress, and lost upon her bosom every domestic concern.

Mademoiselle G——n was extremely pretty, and though but low in stature, finely shaped. Possessed of a vivacity often more pleasing than true wit, she talked and looked tenderness, and sometimes enlivened conversation with a double entendre;

Digitized by Google

which coming from pretty lips, is generally attended with the desired success. These were qualifications sufficient to captivate a person unacquainted with the world. Voltaire became enamored, and took every opportunity of indulging the capricious, though expensive desires of a woman, since noted for ruining the fortunes of several of her admirers. Wherever pleasure was to be sold, our young poet and his mistress were first to raise the auction. Extravagance, however, soon brings on want, and this threatened a separation. Mademoiselle G——n had no other passion than that general one which women entertain for the opposite sex; any other man equally good-natured, open, and simple, would have been equally agreeable with Voltaire; she therefore felt no pain in the thoughts of separation. But it was quite otherwise with her youthful admirer; he entertained romantic ideas of the sex, considered woman as generally described in books, and looked upon beauty as the transparent covering of virtue. The apprehension, therefore, of being obliged to part gave him no small uneasiness. The more this apprehension increased, the more diligent he was in contriving means to satisfy her rapacity. He had already extorted money from his father by various pretences; but this resource now began to fail him. His mistress had frequently assured him, that it was polite to deceive the old man; that comedy every day afforded instances of this laudable disobedience; and often intimated, that money must be supplied or love discontinued. What was to be done in such a dilemma? To subdue his passion was a task he was as yet quite unacquainted with; he was resolved, therefore, to add one falsehood more to his former account. In pursuance of this resolution, he gravely assured his father, that the Cardinal Polignac, who was employed by the court of France to adjust the plan of pacification at Utrecht, had consented to take him in his retinue; and as it was proper to appear gen-

Digitized by Google

teelly on such an occasion, our adventurer requested a hundred pounds for his equipment, promising to regulate his future conduct by the strictest prudence. The old man was the more inclined to believe this story, as it was a place he had been soliciting for his son some time before; he therefore advanced the money, and Voltaire, rejoicing in the success of his stratagem, flew to share his joy and his acquisition with his charming deluder.

I am not insensible, that by recounting these trifling particulars of a great man's life, I may be accused of being myself a trifler; but such circumstances as these generally best mark a character. These youthful follies, like the fermentation of liquors, often disturb the mind only in order to its future refinement: a life spent in phlegmatic apathy resembles those liquors which never ferment, and are consequently always muddy. Let this then, be my excuse, if I mention any thing that seems derogatory from Voltaire's character, which will be found composed of little vices and great virtues. Besides, it is not here intended either to compose a panegyric or draw up an invective; truth only is my aim: an impartial view of his history may show him guilty of some errors, but it will at last turn the balance greatly in his favor.

But to proceed. In a few days the old man began to testify some uneasiness at seeing his son make no preparations for his intended journey; but lost all patience when he found that the cardinal had set out, and left him behind. He had for some time known his correspondence with Mademoiselle G——n, and conjectured that her apartment would be the most likely place to find him. He accordingly went to her house, and finding the door by accident open, entered without ceremony; when, unfortunately, the first figure that presented was young Voltaire coming down stairs, pale and emaciated both by his apprehensions

Digitized by Google

and debauchery. The father being resolved upon the severest correction, with his cane in his hand pursued the delinquent up stairs. Voltaire now saw that a drubbing was inevitable, and therefore thought it the best way, if possible, to divert his father's anger by a jest. Accordingly, when he had run up to the third story, drawing his sword, he cried out to his father, who was not yet got up to the second, "Sir, you must excuse me, if I consider our relationship now at an end; for we are at least three removes asunder."*

His father, however, in his present disposition, could by no means relish a jest: he desisted from his pursuit, but went directly away, meditating a much severer punishment. Voltaire, who thought the storm was over, went down to laugh away his fright with his mistress; and the young lovers began to be extremely facetious upon the awkward chagrin of the old man. But their mirth was soon interrupted by a file of musketeers, who came to conduct our poet to the bastille, for having drawn his sword upon his father. This was an early initiation into misery: to be snatched from the arms of an alluring mistress, and be confined in a gloomy prison, without fire, candle, pen, or ink, was a reverse of fortune which might throw a damp upon men of an ordinary degree of fortitude; but Voltaire bore it with an air that showed the utmost resolution; he entered his prison with the most cheerful serenity, repeating from his most favorite poets such passages as were applicable to his circumstances. On such occasions of distress, the poet, perhaps, has the advantage of all others; when forsaken by society, the muse administers her friendly consolation, and softens even the horrors of confinement. A bit of red chalk was all that Voltaire had to serve instead of a pen, and the white walls of his prison supplied the place of paper; yet even with these

* In French it runs thus:—"Au troisième degré je ne connais pas de parent!" The pun is lost in English.

Digitized by Google

rude materials he sketched out the first canto of his Henriade. The traces of his pencil are, to this day, preserved in the chamber to which he was confined, with as much veneration as the paintings of Raphael in the galleries of the curious.

When he had remained three weeks in prison, his father, who had taken this severe method only in order to his reformation, was appeased, and the delinquent was again admitted into favor. It is a doubt whether the incident of his imprisonment was more fortunate for him, or beneficial to the public. His intrepid behavior soon gained him the notice of the great; his confinement turned his mind, which was wholly dissipated on pleasure, from debauchery to ambition, and gave the world one of the greatest poets that any age has produced.

He now prepared in good earnest to follow the Cardinal Polignac to Utrecht; and some recommendatory letters which his father's interest had procured, gave him reason to expect a favorable reception from his excellency. Accordingly, without taking leave of the companions of his debauchery, he set out upon his journey, and arriving at Utrecht, presented his letters of recommendation to the Cardinal. Polignac was one of the deepest scholars and most refined politicians of the age. His Anti-Lucretius is sufficient to establish his character as one of the first in the literary world; and his address at the treaty of Utrecht fully evinces his skill in the business of the cabinet. He was particularly remarkable for reading every man's real character, upon the slightest acquaintance; and, notwithstanding all our young poet's precautions, this penetrating politician quickly perceived his violent attachment to pleasure. Yet he nevertheless had sufficient address to become a favorite, and scarcely a day passed in which the Cardinal did not spend some time in conversation with his gay libertine; for so he was pleased to call him. Madame Dunoyer relates some of the intrigues for which

Digitized by Google

Voltaire was remarkable at Utrecht; but as they contain little more than what every reader may suggest, namely, his making love and his addresses being crowned with success, I shall pass them by, particularly as he himself asserts the falsehood of all that his female biographer has been pleased to say of him.

Upon his return to Paris, he had again an apartment in his father's house: here he united the characters of the man of pleasure and the philosopher; dedicated the morning to study, and the evening to society. His companions now were very different from those he had some time before associated with; he began to have a reputation for genius, and some of the politest of either sex in Paris were pleased to admit him among the number of their intimates.

Our poet had always a desire of thinking differently from other people. He was particularly fond of controversy, and often mistook paradox for refinement. Of this fault he was more guilty in youth than in riper age; for it was about this time that he thought proper to confine himself to his chamber, to draw up a new system of religion, and abolish the old one. He had been employed thus six or seven days; when his father, surprised at his keeping his chamber so closely, thought proper to enter and inquire the reason. When he perceived how the youth was employed, he was almost unable to suppress his astonishment; but recollecting that it was impossible to convince by reason a vain young man, who neither had patience nor perhaps abilities for a slow and painful investigation, he was resolved to work, if possible, upon his passions. Accordingly, taking his son by the hand, he led him into his own apartment, and there, pointing to a large crucifix, exquisitely painted, which hung at one end of the room, "My son," said he, "you would alter the religion of your country,—behold the fate of a reformer!" This seasonable remonstrance had the desired success; he laid by his controversial

Digitized by Google

pieces, and turned to a subject of which he was much more capable. Fired with a love of antiquity, as he himself informs us, he was resolved to modernize the Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, and try how a subject which Aristotle has asserted to be the fittest for tragedy, could do upon the French theatre. They had hitherto seen not more than one or two tragedies on their stage without a love plot, and upon that all the other incidents generally turned. It was, therefore, a hardy undertaking in so very young a man, to introduce Grecian severity, and show his countrymen that an instructive and interesting performance, without that effeminating passion, could be adapted even to the stage of a people who made love one of their most serious employments. This play was acted in the beginning of the year 1718: the public received it with the utmost indulgence; it was played several nights without intermission, and still continues to be performed with the highest applause. The author, however, has always been so modest, as to attribute its success to the greatness of the subject and the excellence of the performers, rather than to the merit of the poet. The critics were divided in their judgment of this piece; some regarded it as too declamatory, and endeavored to show, which indeed was no difficult task, how much the Grecian tragedy was superior; others, considering it as the first fruits of a young aspiring genius, were pleased with the harmony and correctness of the versification and the classic propriety which ran through the whole. Among this number was Madame Du Chatelet, a lady equally famous for wit and learning; perhaps still more known by her connection with our poet, and for the variety of beautiful poems which he has addressed to her. Her apartments might have justly been styled the tribunal of criticism; for they were every day frequented by all whose wit or learning gave them any eminence in the literary world. She took the poet under her protection; and those critics whom

Digitized by Google

her wit could not bring over to his interests, became proselytes to her beauty. In short, Voltaire owed his first rise to her; and she perhaps owes to him immortality. However, though the majority of critics were for him, there were still some refractory. Père Folard, and M. de la Motte of the French Academy, were of the number; the one remarkable for his learning, the other for the fineness of his genius and skill in criticism. They were the reputed authors of several anonymous strictures which were published against the Œdipus of Voltaire; nor did they seem very studious to decline the imputation, though formerly professing themselves among the number of his friends. Men of the first rank in literature often, like the old trees in a forest, keep off those beams of favor from the younger shoots, which are, perhaps, of their own production. De la Motte, either envying the success of our poet, or choosing to enjoy the public favor without a rival, was resolved to show the indifference of Voltaire's performance, rather by example than criticism; and accordingly wrote a tragedy on the very same subject. From the endeavors of a man of established reputation like him, much was expected; particularly as he had the errors of Voltaire before him to avoid, and his excellencies, which he might improve. The town waited with impatience to compare these efforts of contending genius; and their curiosity was at last gratified. La Motte's performance appeared, with a large party to support it; and it accordingly met the fate of all plays which are supported by party: it languished four nights, and then sunk into oblivion. This was a conquest Voltaire's most sanguine hopes could not have suggested: however, such was his ambition, that he was not merely contented with victory, but was resolved to triumph; not satisfied with enjoying the fruits of conquest, but bent upon proclaiming himself conqueror. This, indeed, was a fault of which he was always culpable: no person ever gained the victory in

Digitized by Google

literary contentions so often as he has done; but while he pursued his advantages too far, he turned his opponents into enemies, and when they could no longer lessen his reputation as a wit, they often strove to blacken his character as a man. He found the majority now wholly on his side; he saw that none praised the tragedy of La Motte, but such as were attached by private connections to his person: in order, then, to insure his success, he was determined to show that his rival was his inferior, not only in poetry, but in criticism also; for a skill in which he had, till now, been especially remarkable. La Motte had written an essay against the rules of the drama, in which he endeavored to show, that its laws had been established, not from nature but caprice, from fashion and not from feelings. This Voltaire undertook to answer; which, as it is both a fine piece of criticism, and an instance of the delicacy with which this great man treated his opponent, I shall beg leave to translate:—

"I shall not presume to speak of the tragedies of either Père Folard, or M. de la Motte: my censure or my praise would appear equally suspicious. I am still farther from bestowing any thing like panegyric upon my own, being convinced that rules alone never made a genius. Conscious I am, that all the fine reasoning and delicate remark that have been exhausted of late years upon this subject, are not equal to one single scene dictated by a fine imagination. There is more to be learned from reading one of the tragedies of Corneille or Racine, than from all the precepts of the Abbé d'Aubignac. All the books composed by connoisseurs upon the art of painting, convey not half the instructions of a single head, which has come from the pencil of Angelo or Raphael.

"The principles of all arts which depend upon the imagination, are easy and simple, equally founded in nature and in reason. The best and worst poets have composed upon the same; they have both used similar materials, and the difference only lies in their application. The same thing happens in music; and even in painting. Poussin is directed by the very rules which conduct the most wretched dauber. It is as needless, therefore, in a poet to attempt to prejudice the public in favor of his performance by introductory criticism, as it would be in a painter or musician to lay down rules to prove that the spectators or the audience must be pleased with their respective performances.

Digitized by Google

"However, as M. de la Motte has thought proper to establish rules different from those which have conducted our great masters in the art of poetry, it is but just to defend the laws of antiquity; not indeed because they are ancient, but because they are natural and useful, and also as they are in some danger from so formidable an opponent.

"This gentleman begins with proscribing the unities of action, time and place. Those are so united with each other, that he who combats one attacks them all. The French were the first among the moderns who revived the laws of the drama: the neighboring nations were long before they could be brought to submit to a restraint which seemed so severe; but as this restraint proceeded from nature, and reason taught them the justice of the compliance, in time they were brought to submit. At present, even in England, their poets are fond of informing the public in their prefaces, that the time of the action and the representation are equal; and they are even more strict in this particular than us who have been their masters.

"Every country now begins to regard those times as barbarous, when the laws of the stage were either not practised or not known. Shakspeare and Lopez de Vega are admired, but not imitated. All are ready to pay France their acknowledgments for having pointed out this just and natural simplicity. Who would have thought that a Frenchman would be the first again to introduce primeval barbarity?

"Though I had no other answer to make to M. la Motte, but that Corneille, Racine, Molière, Addison, Congreve, and Maffei have all observed the rules of the drama, this alone might be sufficient to silence my opponent; but M. de la Motte deserves to be opposed with reasons, and not by authorities.

"A tragedy or comedy has been defined the representation of one action. Should it be demanded, why of one only, and not of two or three together, the reasons are obvious. Either because the mind is incapable of attending to two or three objects at once; or because our concern in the events is lessened by being divided; or because we are displeased to see two actions in the same picture. Uniformity is a constituent of beauty, imprinted on our souls by nature; and all the efforts of art excel, in proportion as they imitate the model she draws.

"For these reasons, unity of place is also essential; for one and the same action cannot be transacted in different places at the same time. If the personages whom I behold in the first act are in Athens, how can they be in Persia in the second? Le Brun has not painted Alexander at Arbela and in the Indies on the same canvas. 'But,' says M. de la Motte, 'there is nothing surprising, if a nation which has not studied itself into a fondness for rule, should be pleased at the representation of Coriolanus, condemned at Rome in the first act, received among the Volcians in the third, and besieging Rome in the fourth.' Yet, why should a sensible people be so much against those rules, which are made only for their pleasure? Are there not, in a subject thus conducted, three

Digitized by Google

distinct tragedies; and were it put in verse, would it not resemble rather a history or a romance than a theatrical performance? Take away the unity of place, and you necessarily destroy that of action The unity of time is naturally connected with the two former. Let us, then, hold to the three unities, as the great Corneille has laid them down: in these we shall find every other rule of the drama contained, resulting from these, or conspiring to assist them.

"M. de la Motte, however, is pleased to call them principles, first invented by fancy, and supported by fashion: he maintains that they may with propriety be dispensed with in our tragedies, since they are entirely neglected in the opera. This method of reasoning somewhat resembles the absurdity of the politician, who would reform a regular government by the example of an anarchy. Absurdity joined with magnificence characterize the opera. In this the ears and the eyes find more entertainment than the mind. A subjection of the words to the music, renders the most ridiculous extravagances excusable. Cities are ransacked in recitative: the palaces of Pluto and of the sun, of gods and devils, of magicians and monsters, rise, form a dance, and disappear in the twinkling of an eye. We tolerate, nay are pleased with these extravagances, because the spectator in such circumstances imagines himself transported into a fairy land; and provided he is entertained with good music, fine dancing, and a few interesting scenes, he is content. It would be as ridiculous to demand unity of action, time, and place in a pleasing opera, as to introduce dancing devils into a regular tragedy.

"Yet, though these regularities may be dispensed with in the opera, the best we have of this kind are those in which the unities are least violated. If I am not mistaken, there are some in which dramatic propriety is inviolably preserved; which serves to prove how necessary, natural, and interesting it is to every spectator. How unjust, therefore, is it to condemn our nation of levity for disapproving in one species of composition, what we approve in another! In tragedy we require perfection; there is in it no music to divert the attention, nor dances to confound: all our pleasure depends upon intellect alone; we there admire the address of the poet, who, in one day and in one place, describes a single action which charms without fatigue, and fills the mind without confusion; where our pleasure rises by just degrees, and terminates with moral propriety. The more difficult this simplicity appears, the more it is cheering; and we find upon examination, that most of our pleasure results from the various uniformity of the representation.

"M. de la Motte is not content with depriving us of theatrical propriety; he would also banish poetry from the stage, and have all our pieces represented in prose. It is a little extraordinary, that an ingenious writer, possessed of an imagination truly poetic, who has seldom written prose, except to vindicate or explain his own poetry, should write against verse, with the same contempt with which he has written against Homer; whom, nevertheless, he has thought proper to translate. Neither Virgil, Tasso, Boileau, Racine, or Pope, ever

Digitized by Google

wrote against poetry, nor Lully against music, nor Newton against astronomy. There are sometimes men found, who fancy themselves superior to their profession—the surest symptoms of their being actually below it; but this is the first time we have seen any attempting to asperse those talents to which they owe all their reputation. There are already too many who, having no acquaintance with the charms of poetry, affect to despise it. Paris abounds with men, otherwise of good understandings, who are naturally destitute of organs capable of relishing harmony; to such music is but noise, and poetry but ingenious trifling. Should these be informed that a person of merit, and who has composed five or six volumes of poetry, is of their opinion, would they not be apt to regard all other poets as fools, and him as the only one of all his brethren who had found the use of his reason? Let me, then, for the honor of our profession, endeavor to answer him; even let me add, for the honor of a country which owes part of its reputation among strangers to a perfection in this very art which he affects to despise.

"It is advanced by this gentleman, that rhyme is a modern invention, and had its rise in times of ignorance and barbarity: yet, notwithstanding this, all nations, except the ancient Greeks and Romans, have rhymed, and continue the custom to this day. The return of similar sounds is so natural to mankind, that we find rhymes obtain even in the most savage regions, as well as in Italy, Spain, France, and England. Montaigne presents us with an American ode, composed in this manner; and in one of the papers of the Spectator, written by Mr. Addison, we are presented with a translation of a Lapland ode, originally composed in rhyme.*

"The Greek,—'quibus dedit ore rotundo musa loqui,'—placed in an indulgent climate, and favored by nature with finer organs than other nations, formed a language which, by the length or shortness of its syllables, expressed the calm or the impetuous dictates of the mind. From this happy variety in the construction of their language, resulted such music in their prose, as well as verse, as no nation but the ancient Italians could ever succeed in imitating.

"It is not, however, rhyme alone, but measure also, which this ingenious gentleman condemns. Before the time of Herodotus, history was written only in verse; this custom the Greeks borrowed from the ancient Egyptians, a people politic, learned, and wise. It was founded in nature; for the end of history being to preserve an account of the actions of a few great personages, which might serve as examples to posterity, as men had not yet attained the art of swelling the transactions of some obscure convent, or insignificant village, into several folios, nothing was transmitted but what was worth remembering; nothing but what was remarkable was generally treasured up in the memory as a guide to action. Verse, therefore, was proper to assist in this particular; accordingly, the first legislators, founders of religion, and historians, were poets by profession. On such occasions, however, poetry must necessa-

* [See Spectator, No. 366. The paper in question was written by Steele.]

Digitized by Google

rily have wanted either harmony or precision. Virgil at last appeared, who united these two excellences which seemed so incompatible. Boileau and Racine had the same success; a person who has read all the three, who knows that they are translated into almost all the European languages, but idly employs his talents in endeavoring to render them contemptible: such censure often reverts upon the accuser.

"I rank Boileau and Racine in the same class with Virgil, in regard to versification; for had the author of the Æneid been born a Frenchman, it is probable he would have written like them; and had they lived in ancient Rome, they would have moulded the Latin language into the same harmonious cadence with the celebrated Mantuan. When, therefore, M. la Motte censures versification as ridiculous, mechanical, trifling, he not only accuses our poets, but all those of antiquity. Virgil and Horace have been as assiduous as we, in the mechanism of their verses. A happy arrangement of dactyl and spondee was as difficult as our rhyme and metre. Their labor must certainly have been great; since the Æneid, after the corrections of eleven years, was still thought far short of requisite perfection.

"But this ingenious author still asserts, that turning any scene of tragedy into prose diminishes neither its force nor its beauty. To prove this assertion, he transposes the first scene of Mithridates, and has thus rendered it intolerable to even the meanest capacity. 'But still,' continues he, 'our neighbors have rejected rhyme in their tragedies.' This must be granted; but then they are written in verse, which though without rhyme is, from the nature of their languages, harmonious. Should we attempt to cast off a yoke which was worn by Corneille and Racine, we might, perhaps, be subjected to do it from an inability to imitate rather than a desire to reform. The Italians and the English can dispense with rhyme, since their poetry has several liberties which we want: every language has its particular genius—inflections peculiarly its own; a construction of periods different from all others, and a particular use of the auxiliary verbs; perspicuity and elegance is the genius of ours; we admit of no transpositions in our poetry, but the words must flow in the exact order of our ideas. Hence, therefore, proceeds the unavoidable necessity of rhymes, to make a distinction between our prose and our poetry. He compares our poets, our Corneilles, Racines, and Boileaus, to a juggler who is employed in throwing a grain of corn through the eye of a needle; adding, that all such puerilities have no other merit but that of difficulty surmounted.

"I must confess that bad verses pretty much fall under this censure. They differ from bad prose only by the addition of rhyme; and this advantage alone neither gives merit to the poet, nor pleasure to the reader. What charms us is the harmony which results from this merit. Whoever encounters a difficulty, merely for the sake of overcoming it, without expecting any other advantage, is little better than a fool; but he who brings pleasure from objects which seem incapable of affording any, is certainly meritorious. It is a laborious task to

Digitized by Google

form a fine statue, to paint a striking picture, to compose pleasing music, or good verses. Wherefore, the names of those great men who have surmounted the respective difficulties will last, perhaps, longer than the kingdoms which gave them birth.

"I could continue this dispute to greater length, but it would probably be regarded as proceeding from personal resentment; and my intentions might be branded with a malignity from which I am as remote as from the sentiments of my ingenious adversary. It gives me much greater pleasure to profit by many judicious reflections spread through his book, than to controvert his opinions. Let it be sufficient, then, that I have endeavored to defend an art I have ever loved; an art which he should have defended also."

This criticism, which conceals a fine satire upon the author it professes to answer, was not published till the year 1730, though written, and communicated to M. Voltaire's friends, long before. M. de la Motte himself pretended to approve it, yet inwardly felt all the resentment of disappointed ambition, and (as if from the time Voltaire had defended poetry, he was no longer to have quarter from his brothers of the profession) he was ever after persecuted by party, and marked as an object of envy and reproach. Père Folard soon after wrote a tragedy upon the same subject, but it was more short-lived than even the former attempt of La Motte; serving only to advance the reputation of the first Œdipus, and to increase the number of the friends and the enemies of M. Voltaire.

There is, perhaps, no situation more uneasy than that of being foremost in the republic of letters. If a man who writes to please the public cannot at the same time stoop to flattery, he is certainly made unhappy for life. There are a hundred writers of inferior merit continually expecting his approbation: these must be all applauded, or made enemies; the public must be deceived by ill-placed praise, or dunces provoked into unremitting persecution. This under-tribe in the literary commonwealth perfectly understand the force of combinations, are liberal in their mutual commendations, and actually enjoy all the pleasures of fame with-

Digitized by Google

out being so much as known to the public: while the man of eminence is regarded as an outcast of their society, a fit object at which to level all their invective, and every advance he makes towards reputation only lifts his head nearer to the storm; till at last he finds, that, instead of fame, he has been all his life only earning reproach, till he finds himself possessed of professing friends and sincere enemies.

Fontenelle and Voltaire were men of unequal merit; yet how different has been the fate of either! Fontenelle was as passionately fond of adulation as Voltaire was ever averse to flattery. The one kindly told every blockhead that he had wit; the other honestly advised him to discontinue a profession in which he was by no means likely to succeed: the one has received all his fame while living; the other must not expect unmixed applause till dead: the one was prudent, insincere, and happy; the other generous, open, and regarded with detestation.

But, though Voltaire was now fairly listed into an open war with all the dunces of society, yet he still had friends of another denomination, who by their power protected him, and by their company made him forget that he had enemies. Madame Du Chatelet was one of this number. At her house he generally spent the mornings, among the learned of Paris, who composed the levee of this learned lady. The sciences then seemed to triumph when patronized by beauty. Madame Chatelet had many personal charms; and though a hard student, her complexion never called in assistant red to heighten its color. She dictated to an admiring circle every morning from Plato, Newton, Clarke, and Leibnitz; and was thought as great an adept in philosophy as the deepest doctor of the Sorbonne. Voltaire soon perceived his deficiency in the sciences; and, as he knew that an excellence in them was the only way to secure his mistress, he set about attaining them with the most intense application. As he in-

Digitized by Google

creased in learning, his intimacy increased in proportion; and at last, an intercourse which began in friendship turned into a passion of a much more masterly nature. His visits became more frequent, his behavior more submissive, and the philosopher was lost in the gallant. Madame Du Chatelet, whose soul knew no other passion but that of science, at first regarded the change in his behavior with indifference, but soon perceived the real motive, and was not entirely displeased at the discovery. There is a principle of vanity in the sex, which gives them pleasure at the acquisition of a new lover, though they have no intention to accept him. She therefore gave him an opportunity of declaring his regard, and of professing a passion which his actions had before sufficiently indicated. Her answer, however, was very different from what he had expected: she informed him, with an apathy truly stoical, that she neither disliked his addresses, nor entirely approved of them. She had no objection to a lover, provided he was pleased to be content with what she could give. Minds could unite and form a happy intercourse without indulging any coarser appetites; and she concluded by recommending to him the Banquet of Plato, as containing her system of love—a system which she was determined to act up to; and she found none more fit than M. Voltaire to be the object of so pure a flame.

Our poet now perceived that books had spoiled her for a mistress, and that she was resolved to sacrifice the substance to the shadow. Yet, as she was in some measure beautiful, as she seemed happy in his conversation and could still be a charming friend, he was resolved to accept of the terms she offered; to be contented with the spare diet which she could afford, and look for more substantial entertainment from others. An opportunity soon offered of this kind.

The Marchioness de Pire, a young widow of exquisite beauty,

Digitized by Google

had taken a fancy to our poet; and as she was possessed of a large jointure, had some intentions of marrying him. She found means to have Voltaire informed of her inclinations, and took care to have her nobility and fortune placed in the most advantageous point of view. Voltaire, who loved the sex but hated matrimony, seemed to be happy in her proposal, and begged an interview, in which our lovers seemed mutually pleased with each other. As all his intentions were to please the lady and himself without the previous ceremony, he declined all conversation upon matrimony, but talked of disinterested passion, unconfined rapture, and all the cant of an insidious designer. The Marchioness, who was as virtuous as beautiful, quickly perceived the tendency of his discourse, and thought proper to break off a conversation which took a turn not at all to her inclinations. At parting she gave him hopes, and enjoined him secrecy. He accordingly promised the strictest honor, and with a heart elated with vanity, he went to communicate his happiness to all his friends. As he unsuspectingly made every person that professed the least regard for him a confidant, among the rest he happened to tell his success to a gentleman who was actually his rival. The consequence of this indiscreet confidence was, that the Marchioness was informed of the whole, and proscribed our repentant lover for ever from her presence. In such a disappointment, the muse was his consolation; he worked the adventure into a comedy, which he dedicated to his unforgiving mistress. The dedication, which it is impossible to translate with elegance equal to the original, runs in plain prose thus:—"Thou who hast beauty without pride, and vivacity without indiscretion; whom heaven has formed with every gift it could bestow; a mind seriously solid, or rapturously gay; accept this picture of the indiscretion of a lover, who lost a mistress by boasting of her favors. Had the heroine of this piece been possessed of thy beauty, who could

Digitized by Google

blame the lover for mentioning so charming a mistress, either through excess of vanity, or excess of love?"

But one adventure more of this nature. The Platonic passion between Voltaire and Madame Du Chatelet was now become a subject of conversation all over Paris. His inconstancy was well known, and it was thought something strange that his attachment to one mistress should have so long a continuance. M. Piron, a man of infinite humor, was resolved to try the sincerity of his passion; not by presenting him with a real, but an imaginary mistress. With this intent he composed a panegyric on Voltaire in the highest strain of flattery, and presented it to him, as coming from a lady in one of the provinces, who was enraptured with his poetry, and had almost conceived a passion for his person. Voltaire read the poem, found it inimitable, and fancied a thousand beauties in a lady of so fine discernment. In short, he was actually fallen in love with a creature of his own imagination, and entreated his dear ugly friend—for so he familiarly used to call Piron—to procure him an interview with a lady of so much merit. Piron promised in a few days to gratify his request, and in the mean time came every morning to tell Voltaire that the young lady was upon her journey, and would arrive very shortly; adding many pathetic exclamations on her beauty, and the delicacy of her behavior. Our poet was at last wound up to the height of expectation; which, when Piron saw, he informed him that the lady was actually arrived, that the chief motive of her journey was to see a man so justly celebrated as M. Voltaire, and that she entreated the honor of his company that very evening. Our poet in raptures prepared himself for the interview, which he expected with the utmost impatience.

The hour at last came, and Voltaire eagerly flew to satisfy at once his love and his curiosity. Upon being introduced into the apartment of his fancied angel, he was at first a little disconcerted

Digitized by Google

to find Madame Du Chatelet of the party; but guess his confusion, when he beheld his ugly friend, dressed up in a lappet-head and petticoat, approach to salute him. In short, he was informed that Piron himself was the fair one who wrote the panegyric, and who consequently expected the proper return of gratitude. "Well," said Voltaire, turning his disappointment to a jest, "if Piron had a grain less wit, I could never have forgiven him." This adventure has since served as the groundwork of a comedy called "La Métromanie,"* infinitely the best modern performance upon the French theatre.

Some disappointments of this kind served to turn our poet from a passion which only tended to obstruct his advancement in more exalted pursuits. His mind, which at that time was pretty well balanced between pleasure and philosophy, quickly began to incline to the latter. He now thirsted after a more comprehensive knowledge of mankind, than either books or his own country could bestow.

England, about this time, was coming into repute throughout Europe, as the land of philosophers. Newton, Locke, and others, began to attract the attention of the curious, and drew hither a concourse of learned men from every part of Europe. Not our learning alone, but our politics also began to be regarded with admiration: a government in which subordination and liberty were blended in such just proportions, was now generally studied as the finest model of civil society. This was an inducement sufficient to make Voltaire pay a visit to this land of philosophers and of liberty.

Accordingly, in the year 1726, he came over to England. A previous acquaintance with Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, and the lord Bolingbroke, was sufficient to introduce him among the polite, and his fame as a poet got him the acquaintance of the

* [See ante, vol. i. p. 430.]

Digitized by Google

learned, in a country where foreigners generally find but a cool reception. He only wanted introduction: his own merit was enough to procure the rest. As a companion no man ever exceeded him when he pleased to lead the conversation; which, however, was not always the case. In company which he either disliked or despised, few could be more reserved than he; but when he was warmed in discourse, and had got over a hesitating manner which sometimes he was subject to, it was rapture to hear him. His meager visage seemed insensibly to gather beauty; every muscle in it had meaning, and his eye beamed with unusual brightness. The person who writes this Memoir, who had the honor and the pleasure of being his acquaintance, remembers to have seen him in a select company of wits of both sexes at Paris,* when the subject happened to turn upon English taste and learning. Fontenelle, who was of the party, and who being unacquainted with the language or authors of the country he undertook to condemn, with a spirit truly vulgar began to revile both. Diderot, who liked the English, and knew something of their literary pretensions, attempted to vindicate their poetry and learning, but with unequal abilities. The company quickly perceived that Fontenelle was superior in the dispute, and were surprised at the silence which Voltaire had preserved all the former part of the night, particularly as the conversation happened to turn upon one of his favorite topics. Fontenelle continued his triumph till about twelve o'clock, when Voltaire appeared at last roused from his reverie. His whole frame seemed animated. He began his defence with the utmost elegance mixed with spirit, and now and then let fall the finest strokes of raillery upon his antagonist; and his harangue lasted till three in the morning. I must confess that, whether from national partiality, or from the elegant sensibility of his manner, I never was so much charmed, nor did

* [See *Life*, ch. v.]

Digitized by Google

I ever remember so absolute a victory as he gained in this dispute.

Upon his arrival in England, his first care was to learn so much of the language as might enable him to mix in conversation and study more thoroughly the genius of the people. Foreigners are unanimous in allowing the English language to be the most difficult to learn of any in Europe. Some have spent years in the study to no purpose; but such was the application, and such the memory of our poet, that in six weeks he was able to speak it with tolerable propriety. In short, his conduct in this particular was such as may serve for a model to future travellers. The French who before visited this island were never at the trouble of attaining our language, but contented with barely describing the buildings and palaces of the kingdom, and transcribing a character of the people from former travellers, who were themselves unacquainted with our national peculiarities. Accordingly, we find few of their books in which the English are not characterized as morose, melancholy, excessive lovers of pudding,* and haters of mankind. This stupid account has been continued down from Scaliger to Muralt, while the virtues and vices which were peculiar to the country were wholly unknown. Voltaire quickly perceived that pride seemed to be our characteristic quality; a source from whence we derived our excellences as well as our defects. He perceived that the only way to understand the English was to learn their language, adopt their manners, and even to applaud their oddities. With this view, when sufficiently initiated into our language, he joined in companies of every rank; lords, poets, and artisans were successively visited, and he attained at the same time a proficiency in our language, laws and government, and thorough insight

* ["M. de Voltaire says, that the English plays are like the English *puddings*; nobody has any taste for them but themselves."—SPENCE.]

Digitized by Google

into our national character. Before him, our reputation for learning had for some time been established in Europe; but then, we were regarded as entirely destitute of taste, and our men of wit known not even by name among the literati. He was the first foreigner who saw the amazing irregular beauties of Shakspeare, gave Milton the character he deserved, spoke of every English poet with some degree of applause,* and opened a new page of beauty to the eyes of his astonished countrymen. It is to him we owe that our language has taken place of the Italian among the polite, and that even ladies are taught to admire Milton, Pope, and Otway. The greatest part of our poet's time, during a residence of two years in England, was spent at Wandsworth, the seat of his excellency Sir Everard Falkener. With this gentleman he had contracted an intimacy at Paris; and as Sir Everard had insisted upon his company before he left France, he now could not refuse. Here he spent his time in that tranquillity and learned ease which are so grateful to men of speculation; had leisure to examine the difference between our government and that of which he was born a subject, and to improve by our example, his natural passion for liberty.

He was resolved, however, to give some lasting testimony of that love which he had for freedom, and which has ever made one of the strongest features in his character. The elder Brutus, condemning his own son in its cause, seemed a fine subject for this purpose, and naturally suited to the British theatre. The first act of this play he accordingly wrote in English, and communicated it to his friends for their approbation. It was

* ["I told Dr. Johnson that Voltaire, in a conversation with me, had distinguished Pope and Dryden thus:—'Pope drives a handsome chariot, with a couple of neat trim nags; Dryden a coach, and six stately horses.' JOHNSON, 'Why, sir, the truth is, they both drive coaches and six; but Dryden's horses are either galloping or stumbling: Pope's go at a steady even trot.'"—BOSWELL, vol. ii. p. 308, ed. 1835]

Digitized by Google

somewhat surprising. to find a stranger who had resided in the country but one year, attempt so arduous an undertaking; but still more so to find him skilled in the beauties and force of our language. The reader may be pleased to see how he wrote in English: he makes Brutus, in the second scene of the first act, thus vindicate the cause of freedom:

Brutus.—"Allege not ties; his (Tarquin's) crimes have broke them all. The gods themselves, whom he has offended, have declared against him. Which of our rights has he not trod upon? True, we have sworn to be his subjects, but we have not sworn to be his slaves. You say you've seen our senate in humble suppliance pay him here their vows. Even here himself has sworn to be our father, and make the people happy in his guidance. Broke from his oaths, we are let loose from ours; since he has transgressed our laws, his the rebellion, Rome is free from guilt."*

This tragedy he afterwards completed in French; and at Paris it met with the fate he had foreseen. No piece was ever translated into a greater number of foreign languages, more liked by strangers, or more decried at home. He dedicated it to Lord Bolingbroke; and as the dedication contains a fine parallel between the English and French theatres, I shall beg leave to translate some part of it here:—

"As it was too venturous an innovation, my lord, to attempt to write a tragedy in French without rhyme, and take such liberties as are allowed in England and Italy, I was at least determined to transplant those beauties from the English stage which I thought not incompatible with French

* *Brutus*—["N'alleguez point ces nœuds que le crime a rompus,
Ces dieux qu'il outragea, ces droits qu'il a perdus.
Nous avons fait, Arons, en lui rendant hommage,
Serment d'obéissance, et non point d'esclavage;
Et puisqu'il vous souvient d'avoir vu dans ces lieux,
Le sénat à ses pieds faisant pour lui des vœux,
Songez qu'en ce lieu même, à cet autel auguste,
Devant ces mêmes dieux, il jura d'être juste,
De son peuple et de lui tel était le lien:
Il nous rend nos serments lorsqu'il trahit le sien:
Et dès qu'aux lois de Rome il ose être infidèle,
Rome n'est plus sujette, et lui seul est rebelle."]

Digitized by Google

regularity. Certain it is the English theatre is extremely defective. I have heard yourself say there was scarcely a perfect tragedy in the language, but to compensate this, you have several scenes which are admirable. Almost all your tragic writers have been likewise deficient in that regularity and simplicity of plot, that propriety of diction, that elegance of style, and those hidden strokes of art, for which we are remarkable since the times of Corneille. However, your most irregular pieces have a peculiar merit; they excel in action, while ours are frequently tedious declamations, and at best, conversation rather than a picture of passion. Our excessive delicacy often puts us upon making an uninteresting recital of what should rather be represented to the eyes of the spectator. Our poets are afraid to hazard any thing new before an audience composed of such as turn all that is not the fashion into ridicule.

"The inconvenience of our theatre also is another cause that our representations frequently appear dry and unentertaining. The spectators being allowed to sit on the stage, destroy almost all propriety of action. For this reason, those decorations which are so much recommended by the ancients can be but very rarely introduced. Thus it happens that the actors can never pass from one apartment into another without being seen by the audience, and all theatrical illusion must consequently be destroyed.

"How could we, for instance, introduce the ghost of Pompey, or the genius of Brutus, into the midst of a parcel of young fellows crowded upon the theatre, and who only stand there to laugh at all that is transacted? How could we, as the late Mr. Addison has done, have the body of Marcus borne in upon the stage before his father? If he should hazard a representation of this nature, the whole pit would rise against the poet, and the ladies themselves would be apt to hide their faces.

"With what pleasure have I seen at London your tragedy of Julius Cæsar, which though a hundred and fifty years old, still continues the delight of the people! I do not here attempt to defend the barbarous irregularity with which it abounds. What surprises me is, that there are not more in a work written in an age of ignorance, by a man who understood not Latin, and who had no other master but a happy genius. The piece is faulty; but, amidst such a number still, with what rapture do we see Brutus, with his dagger stained with the blood of Cæsar, haranguing the people!

"The French would never suffer a chorus composed of plebeians and artisans to appear upon the theatre; nor would they permit the body of Cæsar to be exposed, or the people excited from the rostrum. Custom, the queen of this world, changes at pleasure the taste of nations, and turns the sources of joy often into objects of disgust.

"The Greeks have exhibited objects upon their stage that would be equally disgusting to a French audience. Hippolitus, bruised by his fall, comes to count his wounds, and to pour forth the most lamentable cries. Philoctetes

Digitized by Google

appears with his wound open, and the black gore streaming from it. Œdipus, covered with the blood which flowed from the sockets of his eyes, complains both of gods and men. In a word, many of the Greek tragedies abound with exaggeration.

"I am not ignorant that both the Greeks and the English have frequently erred in producing what is shocking instead of what should be terrible, the disgusting and the incredible for what should have been tragic and marvellous. The art of writing was in its infancy at Athens in the time of Æschylus, and at London in the time of Shakspeare. However, both the one and the other, with all their faults, frequently abound with a fine pathetic, and strike us with beauties beyond the reach of art to imitate. Those Frenchmen who, only acquainted with translations or common report, pretend to censure either, somewhat resemble the blind man who should assert that the rose is destitute of beauty because he perceives the thorns by the touch.

"But, though sometimes the two great nations of which I am speaking transcend the bounds of propriety, and present us with objects of affright instead of terror, we, on the other hand, as scrupulous as they are rash, stop short of beauty for fear of being carried beyond it, and seldom arrive at the pathetic for fear of transgressing its bounds.

"I am by no means for having the theatre become a place of carnage, as we often find in Shakspeare and his successors, who, destitute of his genius, have only imitated his faults; but still I insist, that there are numberless incidents which may at present appear shocking to a French spectator, which, if set off with elegance of diction and propriety of representation, would be capable of giving a pleasure beyond what we can at present conceive."

This gives us a tolerably just representation of the state in which Voltaire found the French theatre. His Œdipus was written in this dry manner, where most of the terrible incidents were delivered in cold recitation and not represented before the spectator. But, by observing our tragedies, like a skilful artist, he joined their fire to French correctness, and formed a manner peculiarly his own.

In studies of this nature he spent his time at Wandsworth, still employed either improving himself in our language, or borrowing its beauties to transplant into his own. His leisure hours were generally spent in the company of our poets, Congreve, Pope, Young, &c., or among such of our nobility as were remarkable either for arts or arms, as Peterborough, Oxford,

Digitized by Google

and Walpole. He was frequently heard to say, that Peterborough had taught him the art of despising riches, Walpole the art of acquiring them, but Harley alone the secret of being contented.

The first time he visited Mr. Congreve, he met with a reception very different from what he had expected. The English dramatist, grown rich by means of his profession, affected to despise it, and assured Voltaire, that he chose rather to be regarded as a gentleman than a poet. This was a meanness which somewhat disgusted the Frenchman, particularly as he himself owed all his reputation to his excellence in poetry; he therefore informed Mr. Congreve, that his fame as a writer was the only inducement he had to see him, and though he could condescend to desire the acquaintance of a man of wit and learning, he was above soliciting the company of any private gentleman whatsoever.* The reflection of another upon this occasion was, that he certainly is below the profession who presumes to think himself above it.

M. Voltaire has often told his friends, that he never observed in himself such a succession of opposite passions as he experienced upon his first interview with Mr. Pope. When he first entered the room, and perceived our poor melancholy English poet, naturally deformed, and wasted as he was with sickness and study, he could not help regarding him with the utmost

* [" Congreve had one defect, which was, his entertaining too mean an idea of his first profession, though it was to this he owed his fame and fortune. He spoke of his works as of trifles that were beneath him; and hinted to me, at our first conversation, that I should visit him on no other footing than that of a gentleman, who had led a life of plainness and simplicity. I answered, that had he been so unfortunate as to be a mere gentleman, I should never have come to see him; and I was very much disgusted at so unseasonable a piece of vanity."—*Letters concerning the English Nation.*]

Digitized by Google

compassion. But, when Pope began to speak, and to reason upon moral obligations, and dress the most delicate sentiments in the most charming diction, Voltaire's pity began to be changed into admiration, and at last even into envy. It is not uncommon with him to assert, that no man ever pleased him so much in serious conversation, nor any whose sentiments mended so much upon recollection.*

There is a story commonly told of his being in company with Dr. Young† and some others, when the conversation happened to turn upon Milton's Paradise Lost. He displayed, as the story goes, all his critical skill in condemning the allegorical personages which Milton has introduced into his poem, and this with the utmost vivacity and unbounded freedom of speech. Upon which Young, regarding him with a fixed eye, spoke the following epigram:

> "So very witty, wicked, and so thin;
> Fit emblem sure of Milton, Death, and Sin."

However, I only mention this to show what trifles are generally ascribed to men when once grown famous. The wretchedness of the epigram will readily convince those who have any pretensions to taste, that Dr. Young could never have been the author: pro-

* "[Voltaire, while in England, was entertained by Pope at his table, when he talked with so much grossness that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the court, and never considered him a man worthy of confidence."—JOHNSON, Life of Pope.]

† ["Voltaire, like the French in general, showed the greatest complaisance outwardly, and had the greatest contempt for us inwardly. He consulted Dr. Young about his Essay in English, and begged him to correct any gross faults he might find in it. The Doctor set very honestly to work, marked the passages most liable to censure; and when he went to explain himself about them Voltaire could not avoid bursting out a-laughing in his face."—SPENCE, on the authority of Dr. Young.]

Digitized by Google

bably some blockhead made the verses first, and the story after.*

Among the number of those who either patronized him, or enrolled themselves in the list of his friends, was the Duchess of Marlborough. She found infinite pleasure in the agreeable vivacity of his conversation; but mistook his levity for want of principle. Such a man seemed to her the properest person to digest the memoirs of her life; which, even so early as this, she had an inclination of publishing. She proposed the task accordingly to him, and he readily undertook to oblige her. But when she showed him her materials, and began to dictate the use she would have them turned to, Voltaire appeared no longer the good-natured complying creature, which she took him for. He found some characters were to be blackened without just grounds, some of her actions to be vindicated that deserved censure, and a mistress to be exposed to whom she owed infinite obligations. Our poet accordingly remonstrated with her grace, and seemed

* ["It was on the occasion of Voltaire's criticism on the episode of Death and Sin, that Dr. Young spoke that couplet to him:—

'Thou 'rt so ingenious, profligate, and thin,
That thou thyself art Milton's Death and Sin.'

Voltaire's objection to that fine episode was, that Death and Sin were nonexistents."—SPENCE.

"When Voltaire was in England, Dr. Young had met him at Eastbury, the seat of Bubb Doddington, in Dorsetshire, and enjoys the credit of an extempore epigram on the French poet:—

'Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin.
At once we think thee Milton's Death and Sin.'

From the following passage in the Doctor's poetical dedication of 'The Sea Piece' to Voltaire, it would seem that this extemporaneous reproof was somewhat more gentle than the distich now quoted:—

'No stranger, sir, though born in foreign climes;
In Dorset downs, when Milton's page
With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with *gentle* rhymes."—Dr. ANDERSON.]

Digitized by Google

to intimate the inconsistency of such conduct with gratitude and justice; he gravely assured her that the publication of secrets which were communicated under the seal of friendship, would give the world no high opinion of her morals. He was thus continuing his discourse, when the Duchess, quite in a passion, snatched the papers out of his hands: "I thought," said she, "the man had sense; but I find him at bottom either a fool or a philosopher."

He was but two years in England, yet it is somewhat strange to think, how much he either wrote, published, or studied during so short a residence. He gave amongst his friends a criticism he had written in English upon Milton, which he concludes in this manner: "It requires reach of thought to discover the defects of Milton; his excellences lie obvious to every capacity; he atones for a few faults by a thousand beauties; and, like Satan, the hero of his own poem, even when fallen he wears the appearance of majesty."

But the performance upon which he founds his most lasting share of fame was published in this country. The French language had hitherto been deemed unsusceptible of the true epic dignity. Several unsuccessful attempts by Ronsard, Chapelaine, and others, had made critics despair of ever seeing a heroic poem in the language; and some writers had laid it down as actually impossible. Voltaire, who seemed to be born to encounter difficulty, undertook the task, and that at an age when pleasure is apt to silence the voice of ambition. This poem, the "Henriade," was first published under the title of the "League." He began it in the Bastile, enlarged and corrected it for several years afterwards, and had some thoughts of publishing it in France. Upon showing the manuscript to Fontenelle, his friend, he was by him advised to retrench several passages which seemed to be written with too warm a spirit of liberty, under such a govern-

Digitized by Google

ment as theirs; but Voltaire, who considered those very passages as the greatest beauties of his work, was resolved the poem should make its first appearance in a country in love with liberty, and ready to praise every performance written in its defence. With this view he brought the work over with him to England, and offered it in the usual manner to a bookseller, in order to be published. The bookseller, as some pretend, either unacquainted with its value or willing to impose upon a stranger, offered him but a trifle for the manuscript, and would print only such a number as he thought proper. These were terms with which the author chose not to comply; and, considering the number and the rank of his friends, he was resolved to publish it by subscription. A subscription was opened accordingly, and quickly filled with persons of the first rank and eminence, not only of Great Britain, but of Europe in general. A condition of the proposals was, that the subscribers should have their books a month before it was published in the ordinary manner in London.

In this situation were things, when an unforeseen accident called our poet out of the kingdom, being sent for by M. D'Argenson, prime minister of France, in order to become the king's historiographer. Voltaire was therefore obliged to return with reluctance home, leaving to his bookseller the care of satisfying the subscribers. Voltaire, however, affirms, that the bookseller, considering that there was no great difference between reading a book a month sooner or later, was resolved to indulge the uriosity of the public first, and gratify the subscribers after; as by this means the profits accruing from the sale, which were to be his own, would be greatly increased. The reader may judge for himself whether this is not the true reason why the subscribers to the Henriade had not the work till a month after it was first published in London; and not against the author but his bookseller should their censure be levelled. It cannot be con-

Digitized by Google

ceived what a number of enemies this raised Voltaire; for all imputed to him that meanness of which those who are of his acquaintance know him to be utterly incapable. A neglect, indeed, he was guilty of, in leaving no friend to see justice done to the public. This may be said of our poet's character in general, that he has frequently been guilty of indiscretions, but never of meanness. A mind employed in the contemplation of great virtues is sometimes guilty of trifling absurdities—

"—— quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura."—Hor.*

An honest man may sometimes unite with such as will render his actions suspected; but then it is the fault of good minds to be too credulous, and instead of condemning such a man of falsehood, we should pity his good-nature.

The poem was dedicated to Queen Caroline, for which she made the author a present of her picture, valued at two hundred guineas. The dedication breathes a spirit which at once characterizes the poet, the philosopher, and the man of virtue; and some prefer it even to any part of the succeeding performance. It must be confessed the Henriade has its faults: its incidents in general do not sufficiently interest or surprise; it seldom rises to the sublime, though it never falls into flatness. The moral reflections return too frequently, and retard that speed which is one of the greatest beauties of narration. However, with all its faults, the French regard it as the first epic poem in their language, and though (national partiality laid aside) it sinks infinitely below Milton, yet it will be sufficient to gain the author immortality.

Upon his return home, he found his fame greatly increased,

* ["I would not quarrel with a slight mistake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuse."—Roscommon.]

Digitized by Google

the prime minister of France himself being proud of ranking among the number of his friends. Scarcely a country of Europe from which the learned did not send him their acknowledgments, for the pleasure and instruction they had received from his last performance. The king of France used frequently to entreat the pleasure of his company; for he found in him one who had learned from the English to treat monarchs with an honest freedom, and who disdained those mean submissions which at once render kings proud and miserable. Had our poet been inclined to make a large fortune; had he been that avaricious wretch which his enemies have often represented him, he had now an opportunity of gratifying his most sanguine expectations. But he was born free, and had imbibed the privileges of a man and a philosopher. Ambition could not bribe him to forfeit his birthright, and he disdained becoming great at the expense of his liberty. The king would frequently desire his company; but Voltaire came only when he thought proper. Sometimes he would beg of his majesty to excuse his attendance, as he had made an appointment elsewhere; sometimes he would return for answer, that he was detained by Madame du Chatelet, and could not possibly come. These excuses the king generally received with the utmost good humor, and never upon Voltaire's appearance resented his former refusal. The truth is, the king loved a companion who had wit enough to amuse him, and good sense enough not to turn his familiarity into abuse.

But, about this time, there was a still greater honor done to our poet's merit than he had ever yet received, though kings and princes had already conspired to raise his reputation. The house of Brandenburgh had been for some ages acquiring strength and power in Germany. At this time Frederick II. sat upon the throne of Prussia, a monarch born to be the father and yet the terror of his subjects. All his family, his children as well as his

Digitized by Google

domestics, feared, and sometimes felt the weight of his displeasure. He was arbitrary in all his commands; and though his desires were frequently bent upon trifles, none in all his court were found who were hardy enough to remonstrate or had courage to lend him advice when he most wanted it. There was, however, found, at last, one resolved to offer his remonstrances, though the consequence threatened unremitting displeasure. The Prince Royal, his son, took this liberty, and sometimes showed the king, with the utmost deference, the dangers attending an excess of avarice, and the whimsical absurdity of employing soldiers only for show. This conduct was immediately construed into disobedience; and this brought on such severity of treatment, that the prince was resolved to leave the kingdom and fly for protection to England. It is not the business of this memoir to mention the accidents by which his intentions were frustrated, nor the miseries he essayed in seeing his dearest friends, who were partners of his design, sacrificed on the scaffold; be it sufficient to say, that he was now put into close confinement, in which he felt many years of severe captivity. The school of misery is the school of wisdom. Instead of nursing up his mind in indolence, or indulging sorrow, he refined his understanding by books, at first his only companions, and when indulged in greater liberties, the learned of whom he was fond had leave to visit him. Thus did this youth of genius spend his time among philosophers and men of virtue, and learn from them the hardest of all arts—the art of being a king. The Henriade of Voltaire reached our philosophic prince in his retreat. He read it, was charmed with the poem, and wished for the acquaintance of the poet. He had himself already written some metaphysical essays in answer to Horrebow. He had also diverted himself at intervals by translating some of the Latin poets, or composing somewhat of his own; but he wanted a friend whose judgment might be relied on

Digitized by Google

—one to whom he could communicate his productions, and who had a capacity to amend them. He had already several learned men with him in his retreat, but they were rather philosophers than poets; he wanted a companion who could unite both the characters, who had solidity to instruct when he designed to be serious, and vivacity to unbend his mind when fatigued with study. Voltaire seemed to him adapted to both those purposes; he therefore resolved to give him an invitation to Prussia.

But the distinctions paid our poet by majesty, and the endearments he received from friendship, only served, by increasing envy, to increase the number of his enemies. Some years before this, an ecclesiastic, the Abbé des Fontaines, one who had some little reputation for poetry, was accused of a heinous crime, and expelled his convent upon that suspicion. Poor and infamous, he knew not where to apply for succor; from his own order he received only reproaches, and the public paid his merits but small regard. Voltaire saw him an object of compassion; he imagined it doubly his duty to relieve him, since he was in distress and a poet. He therefore procured his indigent brother all the conveniences of life, made use of his interest to clear his reputation, and at last effectually re-established a character which he imagined had been unjustly injured There are some obligations too great for gratitude. That is a debt the poor pay as an equivalent for favors; but when those become so great that no gratitude can equal, the mind becomes bankrupt, and pays with envy instead of acknowledgments. Such was the case of the Abbé des Fontaines; and a man whom small obligations might have eternally bound, became an enemy by being too much obliged. I shall not pretend to say, that Des Fontaines was the only person in fault upon this occasion. Voltaire might have required a deference which transcended the bounds of friendship

Digitized by Google

Des Fontaines could only regard him as an equal, and our poet wanted to be treated as a superior.

Their friendship, as was naturally to be expected, was soon converted into hatred. They mutually taxed each other with pride and ingratitude, and at last pleaded before the bar of the public; where each was more solicitous of injuring his opponent than of defending himself. Des Fontaines wrote a pamphlet, entitled the "Voltairomania," containing all the little levities of Voltaire's youth, some true, others taken up on groundless report; he added also the faults of his father and his family to increase the sum, and exhausted all that malice could suggest upon the occasion. But Des Fontaines did not maintain the unequal combat alone. Rousseau, a man of true genius, whose Odes are perhaps as beautiful as those of Horace, entered into the confederacy, and Ramsay served to complete the triumvirate.

In the republic of letters, he who arrogates superiority is sure to be disappointed: in vain he has the voice of the people, that is lost in idle murmurs; but the press is against him, and that speaks in characters far more lasting. Voltaire found himself attacked in the part he held most dear—his moral character. He appears to have been sensibly wounded by his antagonists; for there is scarcely a subsequent publication of his which does not make mention of the falsehood, or the ingratitude of his enemies. The fame he had acquired by the tragedy of Alzira, served to increase their fury, and they only waited an opportunity to renew the assault. That opportunity was soon given. In the year 1736, he published a little poem, entitled "La Defense du Mondain," or an apology for luxury. In this he endeavors to prove, that luxuries are rather serviceable than detrimental to an opulent people. This his enemies eagerly caught up. Des Fontaines had interest with one of his brethren, who had an influence on Cardinal Fleury. The piece was represented to this weak minis-

Digitized by Google

ter as a libel containing many shocking impieties, and the author as deserving the severest punishment. Voltaire had scarcely time to make his defence; he was banished France, and thus at last compelled to yield to the vindictive persecution of Des Fontaines, his inveterate enemy. The Prince of Prussia, upon hearing of our poet's situation, repeated his offers of friendship, and invited him into his kingdom. Voltaire, however, declined the invitation, and chose to reside at the château of Madame du Chatelet, at Cirey, where he employed his time in instructing her in the polite arts. It was here, and for her use, that he drew up that system of Universal History, which, whatever may be its fidelity, is certainly a fine specimen of the solidity of his judgment, and his intimate acquaintance with human nature.

The banishment of M. Voltaire at this time was but short. His friends were active in defending his innocence, and laid his case before the king in such convincing lights, that he was pleased to recall him from exile and restore him to favor. His good fortune, however, was not of long continuance, and only previous to a new disaster. Among the number of favorites at that time at court was Madame de Pompadour, a lady of as much beauty as ever graced a court, but of as indifferent morals as ever disgraced her sex. She had art enough to gain an entire ascendant over the king, and ambition to convert her power to self-interest. While she and her relations sold places and disposed of employments, the nation became almost bankrupt. Wretches raised without merit from obscurity, place all their ambition in wealth and magnificence. Such were her relations, sacrificing every public consideration to money, and even without a blush avowing their rapacity. I have before mentioned that Voltaire had been constituted historiographer to the king. This post had been usually considered as the reward of flattery and not of truth, and was generally bestowed accordingly. Our poet,

Digitized by Google

however, who despised his predecessors for being no better than first flatterers of state, was resolved to show his integrity, though at the expense of his happiness. He intimated with the utmost humility to his majesty, that he feared he could not give posterity those favorable ideas of Louis XV. which he had done of his predecessor; that a mind filled with love could leave no room for that paternal affection which a king owed his people; and he concluded by praising Madame de Pompadour's beauty, but at the same time insinuating her artifice. This was enough to banish him from court; a disgrace which gave him not the least concern, as he ever preferred the tranquillity of retirement to the glare of pageantry; or perhaps it might be his peculiar temper to dislike all acquaintance with those who presumed to be his superiors.

Among his friends in Paris, he led the life of a man and a philosopher, and professed himself the protector of indigent merit. Every youth whose genius led to poetry found in him an encourager; if poor a supporter, and if rich a friend. He despised the court, and all the honors it could bestow: he laughed at Racine, who was slave enough to die at the frown of a tyrant; vindicated the cause of liberty in a land of slaves; and, by his single example, gave a new mode of thinking to the wits of Paris. However, though he despised the company of courtiers, they did not think proper to overlook him: some sought his conversation with the utmost assiduity, and others pretended to regard him as a dangerous member of the state.

It has been already observed, that Madame de Pompadour was by no means in his esteem. This dislike he was imprudent enough to publish in a short satire, in which the king is represented as losing the complaints of the kingdom in her society, and preferring the allurements of a mistress to the voice of virtue and fame. Nothing spreads sooner than scandal or satire; this

Digitized by Google

little performance was quickly read at court, and the king was soon apprised of its author. The monarch, weak, indolent, and voluptuous, could not brook any attempt to control his pleasures. He testified the severest displeasure against the poet, but did not think proper to banish him in direct terms, as he had been long the favorite of the public. It was resolved to send him a private hint, that it would be satisfactory if he would quit the kingdom. Cardinal Fleury accordingly acquainted Voltaire with the king's pleasure, and our poet, contrary to his expectations, refused to go, unless his banishment was made public. This was a refusal that quite disconcerted his enemies; however, they were determined to accomplish that by force which he had refused to solicitation. An unexpected accident effected what all their intrigues could not do. In 1749, his friend and pupil, Madame du Chatelet, died. For her conversation, he had formerly withstood all the invitations of the King of Prussia; in her conversation he found a solace against all the calumnies of the envious, and the insults of the powerful. When she was gone, those ties which held him to his country were broken, and he considered himself, in every sense of the word, a citizen of the world. He determined to accept the invitation, and went to acquaint the Cardinal Fleury with his intentions. The Cardinal gave him permission to quit France; and Voltaire prepared, in the year 1750,* to set out for Prussia, to grace the court of its philosophic monarch.

* ["I set out for Potsdam in June 1750. Astolpha did not meet a kinder reception in the palace of Alcina. To be lodged in the same apartments that Marshal Saxe had occupied, to have the royal cooks at my command when I chose to dine alone, and the royal coachmen when I had an inclination to ride, were trifling favors. Our suppers were very agreeable. If I am not deceived, I think we had much wit. The king was witty, and gave occasion of wit to others; and what is still more extraordinary, I never found myself so much at my ease. I worked two hours a day with his majesty, corrected his works,

Digitized by Google

Frederick the Second, who had only been prince of Prussia when the correspondence between him and Voltaire commenced, had been for some time raised to the throne. There was much expected from him by his subjects while a prince; but, when he came to be invested with regal power, he outdid all their expectations. He had been forced to marry, against his inclinations, a princess of merit and beauty; however, while his father lived, he refused either to cohabit with her, or even to see her. It was generally supposed, that he who had behaved in such a manner while under paternal constraint, would aggravate the lady's misfortunes when he came to the throne. But it was quite otherwise; the day he was crowned she also shared his honors, and though he had not seen her for some years, his treatment of her was now changed into the most assiduous complaisance. Those who had been his favorites in imprisonment expected to enjoy their monarch's bounty without rivals; however, in this they were disappointed. He knew that the desires of a courtier are an abyss that can never be filled up; and therefore, instead of lucrative rewards, he recompensed their adhesiveness to his person by honors. In short, he proved himself in every respect the father of his people: he reformed the laws, encouraged commerce, and invited into his dominions the arts and sciences. These he endeavored to promote both from interest and inclination: his mornings were dedicated to study, part of the day to the review of his troops, and his evenings to society. In those hours of vacant hilarity he always threw aside the king. The persons who made at this time the most shining figures at his court, either for wit or learning, were the Marquis d'Argens, Maupertuis, the Baron Polnitz, and Wolfius.

and never failed highly to praise whatever was worthy of praise, though I rejected the dross. I gave him details of all that was necessary, on rhetoric and criticism, for his use; he profited by my advice, and his genius assisted him more effectually than my lessons."—VOLTAIRE.]

Digitized by Google

The Marquis D'Argens was graceful in person, regularly featured, and had an extreme vivacity in his eye. I mention these trifling particulars only because gallantry constituted the leading part of his character, and for this he was happily formed by nature. He always endeavored to unite in himself the man of pleasure and the philosopher, and only by this means called in the assistance of sentiment to refine his enjoyments; in other words, all his philosophy consisted in epicurism. He was formed for society, spoke infinitely better than he wrote, and wrote infinitely better than he lived. A man of pleasure often leads the most miserable life that can be conceived. Such was his case; he considered every abatement in his enjoyments as insupportable; passed his day between rapture and disappointment, between the extremes of agony and bliss; and often felt a pang as poignant for want of appetite, as the wretch who wants a meal. In these intervals of spleen he usually kept his bed, and only rose to some varied mode of enjoyment.

The King was delighted with this Frenchman's wit, and pleased with his conversation; but was too wise to give him any other place at court than that of superintendent of the pleasures. He was empowered to invite singers and dancers from abroad, to be master of the ceremonies on all Court entertainments, and on those occasions to give laws to the King himself; who never chose to be distinguished from the rest of his subjects, when in pursuit of pleasure.

Maupertuis was a man of a very different disposition. He had led in youth a life of academic severity, and practised and praised temperance. He was possessed of some genius, but more industry; had read and digested a great deal, and was one of that cast of characters, which are content that there should be subordination in the literary world. He was perfectly acquainted with mathematics, and had read some poetry: from the one his

Digitized by Google

writings have borrowed grace, from the other solidity. However, they all want that characteristic of true genius, originality; and while the reader can observe in them nothing to be censured, they have little that can be the subject of praise. What Maupertuis wanted in wit, he made up by prudence. This is a happy succedaneum to genius, and few who are possessed of the one in a very great degree, are found to enjoy the other. No levities ever carried him beyond the bounds of decency; no speech of his ever betrayed the least dislike of the King's conduct, or his measures hence he was regarded at first as a harmless good-natured man, and this by degrees grew into esteem; so that he had the good sense to make himself at last the principal favorite.

Baron Polnitz was formed in the school of adversity. He had been in his youth the sport of fortune; he travelled Europe without money, and all the friends he made were owing to his address. The reader will readily conceive, that he was now and then obliged to act the *chevalier d'industrie*. It must be owned, his integrity in those juvenile adventures has more than once been called in question. But, as a companion, with the exception of Voltaire, perhaps none of his contemporaries could exceed him. Though in his writings he appears a servile encomiast, in conversation he always mixed something of the misanthropist, which gave an air of shrewdness to his observations, and a strain of singularity to his manner. He had learned to read mankind, not by precept but experience; and as the needy generally see the worst side of those they converse with, he regarded human nature in the most disadvantageous points of view.

Wolfe had long been a professor in the university of Halle, in Saxony; but, indulging in a metaphysical turn of thinking, he happened to differ from the modes of speculation at that time established in the schools, for which he was expelled the university. Distress alone was a sufficient recommendation to the King

Digitized by Google

of Prussia's protection; he came over to the court of Berlin, and was graciously received. Whatever opinion his Prussian Majesty might have had of this professor in his youth, he soon altered his sentiments, and regarded him rather as a learned visionary than a man of wisdom. The truth is, his performances are little more than trifling refinements on the opinions of Leibnitz; who being very erroneous himself, cannot be expected to have bequeathed precision to his followers.

From the joint efforts of these men, and of some others, too tedious to mention, the King was resolved to establish a society for the promotion of science and the belles-lettres. The studies of the academy were divided into four different departments, each, however, serving to illustrate or advance the other. The first for metaphysics; the second for mathematics and experimental philosophy; the third for the languages and belles-lettres; and the fourth, for the study and propagation of religion. Maupertuis was chosen president, and the King himself became a member, and gave in his papers in turn.

Such was a picture of the Court of Berlin at the time Voltaire accepted his Majesty's invitation. When the King was apprised of his arrival in his dominions, he went to meet him, attended only by one domestic, some miles out of town, and gave him the most cordial reception. He found Voltaire even more than his hopes or his works had described him. An easy fluency of animated observation generally composed his conversation: he had for some time thrown aside the man of wit, for the more substantial character of the man of wisdom; he had refined by study all that paradox of which he was once so fond; he assumed neither the character of a misanthrope, like Polnitz, nor of an undistinguishing admirer of the human species, like D'Argens. The King perceived he was possessed of more historical learning

Digitized by Google

than Maupertuis, and more sprightly sallies of imagination than himself, even in his gayest moments. But, while I thus describe Voltaire's superiority, his faults must not be concealed. He was perfectly conscious of his own excellence, and demanded a deference from his brother poets which they did not choose to indulge. This at first raised some jealousies, and the King perceived them; but such was his address, so nicely did he divide his favors and his marks of esteem among these rival wits, that each thought himself the favorite, and all contributed to render the Court of Berlin the most polite in Europe.

"But, whatever favors the King bestowed on others, Voltaire enjoyed the strongest marks of his friendship and esteem. To him he communicated his writings, desired his advice with regard to his future designs, and made him a partner in the secrets of his government. He was offered the most honorable and lucrative employments; but these he refused, alleging that it was not riches but friendship that he sought from his connections with kings, and that he came not to impoverish the Court, but to improve it. When he had rested some days after the fatigues of his journey, he thought it his duty to write to his old friend, Cardinal Fleury, and at the same time sent him a performance ascribed to the King of Prussia, entitled "Anti-Machiavel." The letter and the book the Cardinal received with the most extreme satisfaction, and returned Voltaire his acknowledgments in a well-written epistle, in which he informed him of the pleasure he found in his present; adding, that if the author of this fine performance was not a king, at least he deserved to be one; and that if such a man had been born in the humblest station, his merits would have raised him to the greatest. This letter Voltaire communicated to Frederick, and it was, perhaps, one cause of the alliance which soon succeeded between the Courts of

Digitized by Google

France and Prussia. The greatest events often rise from the slightest causes. . . . . *

* [With Voltaire's residence at the court of Berlin, this memoir breaks off. A dispute with Maupertuis was followed by Voltaire's disgrace. He endeavored to negotiate a return to Paris, but his "Pucelle d'Orléans" had excited so much displeasure, that he was not allowed to remain in the capital. He now settled near Geneva, but taking soon after a part in the political contentions then prevailing in that republic, and having become involved in disputes with many of the principal people, he thought it best to leave the place. He therefore purchased the estate of Fernay, in the Pays de Gex; where he resided the remainder of his life, with his niece, Madame Denis. In February 1778, he visited Paris; where he died on the 30th of May, at the advanced age of eighty-five.]

Digitized by Google

THE LIFE

OF

RICHARD NASH, OF BATH, ESQ.

EXTRACTED PRINCIPALLY

FROM

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

—— Non ego paucis
Offendar maculis. HOR.

[*Written in* 1762, *and now first collected. See* LIFE, ch. x.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

THE LIFE

OF

RICHARD NASH, Esq.,

&c., &c.

The following Memoir is neither calculated to inflame the reader's passions with descriptions of gallantry, nor to gratify his malevolence with details of scandal. The amours of coxcombs and the pursuits of debauchees are as destitute of novelty to attract us as they are of variety to entertain; they still present us but the same picture, a picture we have seen a thousand times repeated. The life of Richard Nash is incapable of supplying any entertainment of this nature to a prurient curiosity. Though it was passed in the very midst of debauchery, he practised but few of those vices he was often obliged to assent to. Though he lived where gallantry was the capital pursuit, he was never known to favor it by his example, and what authority he had was asserted to oppose it. Instead, therefore, of a romantic history filled with warm pictures and fanciful adventures, the reader of the following account must rest satisfied with a genuine and candid recital compiled from the papers he left behind, and others equally authentic; a recital neither written with a spirit of satire nor

Digitized by Google

panegyric, and with scarcely any other art than that of arranging the materials in their natural order.

But though little art has been used, it is hoped that some entertainment may be collected from the life of a person so much talked of, and yet so little known as Nash. The history of a man who for more than fifty years presided over the pleasures of a polite kingdom, and whose life, though without any thing to surprise, was ever marked with singularity, deserves the attention of the present age; the pains he took in pursuing pleasure, and the solemnity he assumed in adjusting trifles, may one day claim the smile of posterity. At least such a history is well calculated to supply a vacant hour with innocent amusement, however it may fail to open the heart, or improve the understanding.

Yet this life, how trifling soever it may appear to the inattentive, was not without its real advantages to the public. He was the first who diffused a desire of society and an easiness of address among a whole people, who were formerly censured by foreigners for a reservedness of behavior and an awkward timidity in their first approaches. He first taught a familiar intercourse among strangers at Bath and Tunbridge, which still subsists among them. That ease and open access first acquired there, our gentry brought back to the metropolis, and thus the whole kingdom by degrees became more refined by lessons originally derived from him.

Had it been my design to have made this history more pleasing at the expense of truth, it had been easily performed, but I chose to describe the man as he was, not such as imagination could have helped in completing his picture: he will be found to have been a weak man, governing weaker subjects, and may be considered as resembling a monarch of Cappadocia, whom Cicero somewhere calls, "the little king of a little people."

But while I have been careful in describing the monarch, his

Digitized by Google

dominions have claimed no small share of my attention. I have given an exact account of the rise, regulation, and nature of the amusements of the city at Bath; how far Nash contributed to establish and refine them, and what pleasure a stranger may expect there upon his arrival. Such anecdotes as are at once true and worth preserving are produced in their order, and some stories are added, which, though commonly known, more necessarily belong to this history than to the places from whence they have been extracted. But it is needless to point out the pains that have been taken, or the entertainment that may be expected from the perusal of this performance. It is but an indifferent way to gain the reader's esteem, to be my own panegyrist; nor is this preface so much designed to lead him to beauties, as to demand pardon for defects.

History owes its excellence more to the writer's manner than to the materials of which it is composed. The intrigues of courts, or the devastation of armies, are regarded by the remote spectator with as little attention as the squabbles of a village, or the fate of a malefactor, that falls under his own observation. The great and the little, as they have the same senses, and the same affections, generally present the same picture to the hand of the draughtsman; and whether the hero or the clown be the subject of the memoir, it is only man that appears with all his native minuteness about him; for nothing very great was ever yet formed from the little materials of humanity.

Thus no one can properly be said to write history, but he who understands the human heart, and its whole train of affections and follies. Those affections and follies are properly the materials he has to work upon. The relations of great events may surprise indeed; they may be calculated to instruct those very few who govern the million beneath: but the generality of mankind find the most real improvement from relations which

Digitized by Google

are levelled to the general surface of life, which tell—not how men learned to conquer, but how they endeavored to live—not how they gained the shout of the admiring crowd, but how they acquired the esteem of their friends and acquaintance.

Every man's own life would perhaps furnish the most pleasing materials for history, if he only had candor enough to be sincere, and skill enough to select such parts as once making him more prudent, might serve to render his readers more cautious. There are few who do not prefer a page of Montaigne or Colley Cibber, who candidly tell us what they thought of the world and the world thought of them, to the more stately memoirs and transactions of Europe, where we see kings pretending to immortality, that are now almost forgotten, and statesmen planning frivolous negotiations, that scarcely outlived the signing.

It were to be wished that ministers and kings were left to write their own histories: they are truly useful to few but themselves; but for men who are contented with more humble stations, I fancy such truths only are serviceable as may conduct them safely through life. That knowledge which we can turn to our real benefit should be most eagerly pursued. Treasures which we cannot use but little increase the happiness or even the pride of the possessor.

I profess to write the history of a man placed in the middle ranks of life; of one, whose vices and virtues were open to the eye of the most undiscerning spectator; who was placed in public view without power to repress censure or command adulation; who had too much merit not to become remarkable, yet too much folly to arrive at greatness. I attempt the character of one who was just such a man as probably you or I may be; but with this difference, that he never performed an action which the world did not know, or ever formed a wish which he did not take pains to divulge. In short, I have chosen to write the life of the noted

Digitized by Google

Richard Nash, as it will be the delineation of a mind without disguise, of a man ever assiduous without industry, and pleasing to his superiors without any superiority of genius or understanding.

Yet, if there be any who think the subject of too little importance to command attention, and who had rather gaze at the actions of the great, than be directed in guiding their own, I have one undeniable claim to their attention. Richard Nash was himself a king. In this particular, perhaps no biographer has been so happy as I. They who are for a delineation of men and manners may find some satisfaction that way, and those who delight in adventures of kings and queens, may perhaps find their hopes satisfied in another.

It is a matter of very little importance who were the parents, or what was the education of a man who owed so little of his advancement to either. He seldom boasted of family or learning, and his father's name and circumstances were so little known, that Dr. Cheyne used frequently to affirm that Nash had no father. The Duchess of Marlborough one day rallying him in public company upon the obscurity of his birth, compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father: "No, madam," replied Nash, "I seldom mention my father in company; not because I have any reason to be ashamed of him, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of me."

However, though such anecdotes be immaterial, to go on in the usual course of history, it may be proper to observe, that Richard Nash, the subject of this memoir, was born in the town of Swansea, in Glamorganshire, on the 18th of October, in the year 1674. His father was a gentleman, whose principal income arose from a partnership in a glass-house; his mother was niece to Colonel Poyer, who was killed by Oliver Cromwell, for defending Pembroke castle against the rebels. He was educated

Digitized by Google

under Mr. Maddocks, at Carmarthen School, and from thence sent to Jesus College, Oxford, in order to prepare him for the study of the law. His father had strained his little income to give his son such an education; but from the boy's natural vivacity, he hoped a recompense from his future preferment. In college, however, he soon showed that though much might be expected from his genius, nothing could be hoped from his industry. A mind strongly turned to pleasure always is first seen at the university; there the youth first finds himself freed from the restraint of tutors, and being treated by his friends in some measure as a man, assumes the passions and desires of riper age, and discovers in the boy, what are likely to be the affections of his maturity.

The first method young Nash took to distinguish himself at college was not by application to study, but by his assiduity in intrigue. In the neighborhood of every university there are girls who with some beauty, some coquetry, and little fortune, lie upon the watch for every raw youth, more inclined to make love than to study. Our hero was quickly caught, and went through all the mazes and adventures of a college intrigue, before he was seventeen: he offered marriage, the offer was accepted, but the whole affair coming to the knowledge of his tutors, his happiness, or perhaps his future misery, was prevented, and he was sent home from college, with necessary advice to him, and proper instructions to his father.

When a man knows his power over the fair sex, he generally commences their admirer for the rest of life. That triumph which he obtains over one, only makes him the slave of another, and thus he proceeds, conquering and conquered, to the closing of the scene. The army seemed the most likely profession in which to display this inclination for gallantry; he therefore purchased a pair of colors, commenced a profound admirer of the

Digitized by Google

sex, and dressed to the very edge of his finances. But the life of a soldier is more pleasing to the spectator at a distance than to the person who makes the experiment. Nash soon found that a red coat alone would never succeed, that the company of the fair sex is not to be procured without expense, and that his scanty commission could never procure him the proper reimbursements. He found, too, that the profession of arms required attendance and duty, and often encroached upon those hours he could have wished to dedicate to softer purposes. In short, he soon became disgusted with the life of a soldier, quitted the army, entered his name as a student in the Temple books, and here went to the very summit of second-rate luxury. Though very poor he was very fine; he spread the little gold he had in the most ostentatious manner, and though the gilding was but thin, he laid it on as far as it would go. They who know the town cannot be unacquainted with such a character as I describe; one, who though he may have dined in private upon a banquet served cold from a cook's shop, shall dress at six for the side box; one of those, whose wants are only known to their laundress and tradesmen, and their fine clothes to half the nobility; who spend more in chair hire than housekeeping, and prefer a bow from a lord to a dinner from a commoner.

In this manner Nash spent some years about town, till at last his genteel appearance, his constant civility, and still more, his assiduity, gained him the acquaintance of several persons qualified to lead the fashion both by birth and fortune. To gain the friendship of the young nobility little more is requisite than much submission and very fine clothes: dress has a mechanical influence upon the mind, and we naturally are awed into respect and esteem at the elegance of those whom even our reason would teach us to contemn. He seemed early sensible of human weakness in this respect: he brought a person genteelly dressed to every

Digitized by Google

assembly; he always made one of those who are called very good company, and assurance gave him an air of elegance and ease.

When King William was called to the throne, Nash was a member of the Middle Temple. It had been long customary for the inns of court to entertain our monarchs upon their accession to the crown, or some such remarkable occasion, with a revel and pageant. In the earlier periods of our history, poets were the conductors of these entertainments: plays were exhibited, and complimentary verses were then written; but by degrees the pageant alone was continued, Sir John Davis* being the last poet that wrote verses upon such an occasion, in the reign of James I.

This ceremony, which has been at length totally discontinued, was last exhibited in honor of King William, and Nash was chosen to conduct the whole with proper decorum. He was then but a very young man; but we see at how early an age he was thought proper to guide the amusements of his country, and be the *Arbiter Elegantiarum* of his time; we see how early he gave proofs of that spirit of regularity, for which he afterwards became famous, and showed an attention to those little circumstances, of which, though the observance be trifling, the neglect has often interrupted men of the greatest abilities in the progress of their fortunes.

In conducting this entertainment Nash had an opportunity of exhibiting all his abilities, and King William was so well satisfied with his performance, that he made him an offer of knighthood. This, however, he thought proper to refuse; which in a person of his disposition seems strange. "Please your Majesty," replied he, when the offer was made him, "if you intend to make me a knight, I wish it may be one of your poor

* [On the death of Queen Elizabeth, in 1602, Sir John Davis accompanied Lord Hunsdon into Scotland, to congratulate King James on his accession to the throne of England.]

Digitized by Google

knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune at least able to support my title." Yet we do not find that the king took the hint of increasing his fortune, perhaps he could not; he had at that time numbers to oblige, and he never cared to give money without important services.

But though Nash acquired no riches by his late office, yet he gained many friends, or what is more easily obtained, many acquaintances, who often answer the end as well. In the populous city where he resided, to be known was almost synonymous with being in the road to fortune. How many little things do we see, without merit, or without friends, push themselves forward into public notice, and by self-advertising, attract the attention of the day! The wise despise them, but the public are not all wise. Thus they succeed; rise upon the wing of folly or of fashion, and by their success give a new sanction to effrontery.

But beside his assurance, Nash had in reality some merit and some virtues. He was, if not a brilliant, at least an easy companion. He never forgot good manners, even in the highest warmth of familiarity, and, as I hinted before, never went in a dirty shirt to disgrace the table of his patron or his friend. These qualifications might make the furniture of his head; but for his heart, that seemed an assemblage of the virtues which display an honest benevolent mind, with the vices which spring from too much good nature. He had pity for every creature's distress, but wanted prudence in the application of his benefits. He had generosity for the wretched in the highest degree, at a time when his creditors complained of his justice. He often spoke falsehoods, but never had any of his harmless tales tinctured with malice.

An instance of his humanity is told us in the Spectator, though his name is not mentioned. When he was to give in his accounts to the Masters of the Temple, among other articles, he

Digitized by Google

charged "For making one man happy, £10." Being questioned about the meaning of so strange an item, he frankly declared, that happening to overhear a poor man declare to his wife and a large family of children, that £10 would make him happy, he could not avoid trying the experiment. He added, that if they did not choose to acquiesce in his charge, he was ready to refund the money. The Masters, struck with such an uncommon instance of good-nature, publicly thanked him for his benevolence, and desired that the sum might be doubled, as a proof of their satisfaction.*

Another instance of his unaccountable generosity, and I shall proceed. In some transactions with one of his friends, Nash was brought in debtor twenty pounds. His friend frequently asked for the money, and was as often denied. He found at last that assiduity was likely to have no effect, and therefore contrived an honorable method of getting back his money without dissolving the friendship that subsisted between them. One day, returning from Nash's chamber with the usual assurance of being paid to-morrow, he went to one of their mutual acquaintance, and related the frequent disappointments he had received, and the little hopes he had of being ever paid. "My design," continues he, "is that you should go, and try to

* ["I remember to have heard a bencher of the Temple tell a story of a tradition in their house, where they had formerly a custom of choosing kings for such a season, and allowing him his expenses at the charge of the society. One of our friends, said my friend, carried his royal inclination a little too far, and there was a committee ordered to look into the management of his treasury. Among other things it appeared, that his majesty, walking incog. in the cloister, had overheard a poor man say to another, 'such a small sum would make me the happiest man in the world.' The king, out of his royal compassion, privately inquired into his character; and finding him a proper object of charity, sent him the money. When the committee read the report, the house passed his accounts with a *plaudite* without farther examination, upon the recital of this article in them: 'For making a man happy, £10.'"—STEELE, *Spectator*, No. 248.]

Digitized by Google

borrow twenty pounds from Nash, and bring me the money. I am apt to think he will lend to you, though he will not pay me. Perhaps we may extort from his generosity what I have failed to receive from his justice." His friend obeyed, and going to Nash, assured him, that unless relieved by his friendship, he should certainly be undone; he wanted to borrow twenty pounds, and had tried all his acquaintance without success. Nash, who had but some minutes before refused to pay a just debt, was in raptures at thus giving an instance of his friendship, and instantly lent what was required. Immediately upon the receipt, the pretended borrower goes to the real creditor, and gives him the money, who met Nash the day after. Our hero upon seeing him, immediately began his usual excuses, that the billiard-room had stripped him; that he was never so damnably out of cash, but that in a few days——. "My dear sir, be under no uneasiness," replied the other, "I would not interrupt your tranquillity for the world; you lent twenty pounds yesterday to our friend of the back stairs, and he lent it to me; give him your receipt, and you shall have mine." "Perdition seize thee," cried Nash, "thou hast been too many for me. You demanded a debt, he asked a favor: to pay thee would not increase our friendship; but to lend him was procuring a new friend, by conferring a new obligation."

Whether men, at the time I am now talking of, had more wit than at present, I will not take upon me to determine; but certain it is, they took more pains to show what they had. In that age, a fellow of high humor would drink no wine but what was strained through his mistress's chemise; he would eat a pair of her shoes tossed up in a fricasee: he would swallow tallow candles instead of toasted cheese, and even run naked about town, as it was then said, to divert the ladies. In short, that was the age of such kind of wit as is the most distant of all others from wisdom.

Digitized by Google

Nash, as he sometimes played tricks with others, upon certain occasions received very severe retaliations. Being at York, and having lost all his money, some of his companions agreed to equip him with fifty guineas, upon this proviso, that he would stand at the great door of the Minster in a blanket, as the people were coming out of church. To this proposal he readily agreed; but the Dean passing by unfortunately knew him. "What!" cried the divine, "Nash in masquerade?" "Only a Yorkshire penance, Mr. Dean, for keeping bad company," said Nash, pointing to his companions.

Some time after this, he won a wager of still greater consequence, by riding naked through a village upon a cow. This was then thought a harmless frolic; at present it would be looked upon with detestation.

He was once invited by some gentlemen of the navy on board a man-of-war, that had sailing orders for the Mediterranean. This was soon after the affair of the revels, and being ignorant of any design against him, he took his bottle with freedom. But he soon found, to use the expression then in fashion, that he was absolutely "bitten." The ship sailed away before he was aware of his situation, and he was obliged to make the voyage in the company where he had spent the night.

Many lives are often passed without a single adventure, and I do not know of any in the life of our hero that can be called such, except what we are now relating. During this voyage, he was in an engagement, in which his particular friend was killed by his side, and he himself wounded in the leg. For the anecdote of his being wounded, we are solely to trust to his own veracity; but most of his acquaintance were not much inclined to believe him, when he boasted on those occasions. Telling one day of the wound he had received for his country, in one of the public rooms at Bath (Wiltshire's, if I do not forget), a lady of dis-

Digitized by Google

tinction that sat by, said it was all false. "I protest, madam," replied he, "it is true; and if I cannot be believed, your ladyship may, if you please, receive farther information and feel the ball in my leg."

Nash was now fairly for life entered into a new course of gayety and dissipation, and steady in nothing but in pursuit of variety. He was thirty years old, without fortune or useful talents to acquire one. He had hitherto only led a life of expedients; he thanked chance alone for his support, and having been long precariously supported, he became, at length, totally a stranger to prudence or precaution. Not to disguise any part of his character, he was now, by profession, a gamester, and went on from day to day, feeling the vicissitudes of rapture and anguish, in proportion to the fluctuations of fortune.

At this time London was the only theatre in England for pleasure or intrigue. A spirit of gaming had been introduced in the licentious age of Charles II., and had by this time thriven surprisingly. Yet all its devastations were confined to London alone. To this great mart of every folly, sharpers from every country daily arrived for the winter; but were obliged to leave the kingdom at the approach of summer, in order to open a new campaign at Aix, Spa, or the Hague. Bath, Tunbridge, Scarborough, and other places of the same kind here, were then frequented only by such as really went for relief: the pleasures they afforded were merely rural; the company splenetic, rustic, and vulgar. In this situation of things, people of fashion had no agreeable summer retreat from the town, and usually spent that season amidst a solitude of country 'squires, parsons' wives, and visiting tenants, or farmers; they wanted some place where they might have each other's company, and win each other's money, as they had done during the winter in town.

To a person who does not thus calmly trace things to their

Digitized by Google

source, nothing will appear more strange, than how the healthy could ever consent to follow the sick to those places of spleen, and live with those whose disorders are ever apt to excite a gloom in the spectator. The truth is, the gaming table was properly the salutary font to which such numbers flocked. Gaming will ever be the pleasure of the rich, while men continue to be men; while they fancy more happiness in being possessed of what they want, than they experience pleasure in the fruition of what they have. The wealthy only stake those riches which give no real content, for an expectation of riches in which they hope for satisfaction. By this calculation, they cannot lose happiness, as they begin with none; and they hope to gain it, by being possessed of something they have not had already.

Probably upon this principle, and by the arrival of Queen Anne there, for her health, about the year 1703,* the city of Bath became in some measure frequented by people of distinction. The company was numerous enough to form a country-dance upon the bowling-green; they were amused with a fiddle and hautboy, and diverted with the romantic walks round the city. They usually sauntered in fine weather in the grove, between two rows of sycamore trees. Several learned physicians, Dr. Jorden and others had even then praised the salubrity of the wells, and the amusements were put under the direction of a master of the ceremonies.

* [" Queen Anne visited Bath in 1702, and was received with every mark of honor and distinction. One hundred young men of the city, uniformly clad and armed, and two hundred of its female inhabitants, dressed up after the manner of Amazons, met her majesty and her train on the borders of Somersetshire, and accompanied them to the western gate of the city. A prodigious inconvenience, however, was occasioned by this distinguished favor, to those who visited Bath for the sake of its waters; for such a tribe of idlers crowded to it in the retinue of the Queen, and in consequence of the novelty of her visit, that the articles of life experienced a rise of one hundred per cent., and a guinea a night was paid for many a bed."—WARNER, Hist. of Bath, p. 209.]

Digitized by Google

Captain Webster was the predecessor of Mr. Nash. This I take to be the same gentleman whom Mr. Lucas describes in his history of the lives of the gamesters, by which it appears, that Bath, even before the arrival of Nash, was found a proper retreat for men of that profession. This gentleman, in the year 1704, carried the balls to the town-hall, each man paying half a guinea each ball.

Still, however, the amusements of this place were neither elegant, nor conducted with delicacy. General society among people of rank or fortune was by no means established. The nobility still preserved a tincture of Gothic haughtiness, and refused to keep company with the gentry at any of the public entertainments of the place. Smoking in the rooms was permitted; gentlemen and ladies appeared in a disrespectful manner at public entertainments in aprons and boots. With an eagerness common to those whose pleasures come but seldom, they generally continued them too long; and thus they were rendered disgusting by too free an enjoyment. If the company liked each other, they danced till morning; if any person lost at cards, he insisted on continuing the game till luck should turn. The lodgings for visitants were paltry, though expensive; the dining rooms, and other chambers, were floored with boards, colored brown with soot and small-beer, to hide the dirt; the walls were covered with unpainted wainscot; the furniture corresponded with the meanness of the architecture; a few oak chairs, a small looking-glass, with a fender and tongs, composed the magnificence of these temporary habitations. The city was in itself mean and contemptible; no elegant buildings, no open streets, nor uniform squares! The pump-house was without any director; the chairmen permitted no gentlemen or ladies to walk home by night without insulting them; and to add to all this, one of the greatest physicians of his age conceived a design of ruining the city, by

Digitized by Google

writing against the efficacy of the waters. It was from a resentment of some affronts he had received there, that he took this resolution; and accordingly published a pamphlet, by which he said, "he would cast a toad into the spring."

In this situation of things it was, that Nash first came into that city, and hearing the threat of this physician, he humorously assured the people, that if they would give him leave, he would charm away the poison of the doctor's toad, as they usually charmed the venom of the tarantula, by music. He therefore was immediately empowered to set up the force of a band of music, against the poison of the doctor's reptile. The company very sensibly increased; Nash triumphed, and the sovereignty of the city was decreed to him by every rank of people.

We are now to behold this gentleman as arrived at a new dignity, for which nature seemed to have formed him: we are to see him directing pleasures, which none had better learned to share; placed over rebellious and refractory subjects, that were to be ruled only by the force of his address, and governing such as had been long accustomed to govern others. We see a kingdom beginning with him, and sending off Tunbridge as one of its colonies.

But to talk more simply, when we talk at best of trifles. None could possibly conceive a person more fit to fill this employment than Nash. He had some wit, as I have said once or twice before; but it was of that sort which is rather happy than permanent. Once a week he might say a good thing: this the little ones about him took care to divulge; or if they happened to forget the joke, he usually remembered to repeat it himself. In a long intercourse with the world he had acquired an impenetrable assurance; and the freedom with which he was received by the great, furnished him with vivacity which could be commanded at any time, and which some mistook for wit. His former intercourse

Digitized by Google

among people of fashion in town had let him into most of the characters of the nobility; and he was acquainted with many of their private intrigues. He understood rank and precedence, with the utmost exactness; was fond of show and finery himself, and generally set a pattern of it to others. These were his favorite talents, and he was the favorite of such as had no other.

But to balance these which some may consider as foibles, he was charitable himself, and generally shamed his betters into a similitude of sentiment, if they were not naturally so before. He was fond of advising those young men, who, by youth and too much money, are taught to look upon extravagance as a virtue. He was an enemy to rudeness in others, though in the latter part of his life he did not much seem to encourage a dislike of it by his own example. None talked with more humanity of the foibles of others, when absent, than he, nor kept those secrets with which he was intrusted more inviolably. But above all (if moralists will allow it among the number of his virtues), though he gamed high, he always played very fairly. These were his qualifications. Some of the nobility regarded him as an inoffensive, useful companion, the size of whose understanding was, in general, level with their own; but their little imitators admired him as a person of fine sense, and great good breeding. Thus people became fond of ranking him in the number of their acquaintance, told over his jests, and Beau Nash at length became the fashionable companion.

His first care when made Master of the Ceremonies, or King of Bath, as it is called, was to promote a music subscription, of one guinea each; for a band, which was to consist of six performers, who were to receive a guinea a week each for their trouble. He allowed also two guineas a week for lighting and sweeping the rooms; for which he accounted to the subscribers by receipt.

The pump-house was immediately put under the care of an

Digitized by Google

officer, by the name of the pumper; for which he paid the corporation an annual rent. A row of new houses was begun on the south side of the gravel-walks, before which a handsome pavement was then made for the company to walk on. Not less than seventeen or eighteen hundred pounds was raised this year and in the beginning of 1706, by subscription, and laid out in repairing the roads near the city. The streets began to be better paved, cleaned, and lighted; the licenses of the chairmen were repressed, and by an act of parliament procured on this occasion, the invalids, who came to drink or bathe, were exempted from all manner of toll, as often as they should go out of the city for recreation.

The houses and streets now began to improve, and ornaments were lavished upon them even to profusion. But in the midst of this splendor the company still were obliged to assemble in a booth to drink tea and chocolate, or to game. Nash undertook to remedy this inconvenience, and by his direction, one Thomas Harrison erected a handsome assembly-house for these purposes. A better band of music was also procured, and the former subscription of one guinea was raised to two. Harrison had three guineas a week for the room and candles, and the music two guineas a man. The money Mr. Nash received and accounted for with the utmost exactness and punctuality. To this house were also added gardens for the people of rank and fashion to walk in; and the beauty of the suburbs continued to increase, notwithstanding the opposition that was made by the corporation; who at that time looked upon every useful improvement, particularly without the walls, as dangerous to the inhabitants within.

His dominion was now extensive and secure, and he determined to support it with the strictest attention. But in order to proceed in every thing like a King, he was resolved to give his subjects a law, and the following Rules were accordingly put up in the pump-room.

Digitized by Google

Rules to be observed at Bath:—

1. "That a visit of ceremony at first coming and another at going away, are all that are expected or desired, by ladies of quality and fashion,—except impertinents.

2. "That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to prevent disturbance and inconveniences to themselves and others.

3. "That gentlemen of fashion never appearing in a morning before the ladies in gowns and caps, show breeding and respect.

4. "That no person take it ill that any one goes to another's play o breakfast, and not theirs;—except captious by nature.

5. "That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen.—N. B. Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. "That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball, show ill manners; and that none do so for the future,—except such as respect nobody but themselves.

7. "That no gentleman or lady takes it ill that another dances before them; except such as have no pretence to dance at all.

8. "That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at the ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

9. "That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them.—N. B. This does not extend to the Have-at-alls.

10. "That all whisperers of lies and scandal, be taken for their authors.

11. "That all repeaters of such lies and scandal be shunned by all company,—except such as have been guilty of the same crime.—N. B. Several men of no character, old women and young ones of questioned reputation, are great authors of lies in these places, being of the sect of levellers."

These Laws were written by Mr. Nash himself, and by the manner in which they are drawn up, he undoubtedly designed them for wit. The reader, however, it is feared, will think them dull. But Nash was not born a writer; for whatever humor he might have in conversation, he used to call a pen his torpedo: whenever he grasped it, it benumbed all his faculties.

But were we to give laws to a nursery, we should make them childish laws; his statutes, though stupid, were addressed to fine gentlemen and ladies, and were probably received with sympathetic approbation. It is certain they were in general religiously

Digitized by Google

observed by his subjects, and executed by him with impartiality; neither rank nor fortune shielded the refractory from his resentment.

The balls, by his directions, were to being at six and to end at eleven. Nor would he suffer them to continue a moment longer, lest invalids might commit irregularities, to counteract the benefit of the waters. Every thing was to be performed in proper order. Each ball was to open with a minuet, danced by two persons of the highest distinction present. When the minuet concluded, the lady was to return to her seat, and Nash was to bring the gentleman a new partner. This ceremony was to be observed by every succeeding couple; every gentleman being obliged to dance with two ladies till the minuets were over, which generally continued two hours. At eight the country-dances were to begin; ladies of quality, according to their rank, standing up first. About nine o'clock a short interval was allowed for rest, and for the gentlemen to help their partners to tea. That over, the company were to pursue their amusements till the clock struck eleven. Then the master of the ceremonies entering the ball-room, ordered the music to desist by lifting up his finger. The dances discontinued, and some time allowed for becoming cool, the ladies were handed to their chairs.

Even the royal family themselves had not influence enough to make Nash deviate from any of these rules. The princess Amelia once applying to him for one dance more, after he had given the signal to withdraw, he assured her royal highness, that the established rules of Bath resembled the laws of Lycurgus, which would admit of no alteration, without an utter subversion of all his authority.

He was not less strict with regard to the dresses in which ladies and gentlemen were to appear. He had the strongest aversion to a white apron, and absolutely excluded all who ven-

Digitized by Google

tured to appear at the assembly dressed in that manner. I have known him on a ball night strip even the Duchess of Queensbury,* and throw her apron at one of the hinder benches among the ladies' women; observing, that none but Abigails appeared in white aprons. This from another would be an insult; in him it was considered as a just reprimand, and the good-natured Duchess acquiesced in his censure.

But he found more difficulty in attacking the gentlemen's irregularities; and for some time strove, but in vain, to prohibit the use of swords. Disputes arising from love of play were sometimes attended with fatal effects. To use his own expression, he was resolved to hinder people from doing "what they had no mind to;" but for some time without effect. However, there happened about that time a duel between two gamesters, whose names were Taylor and Clarke, which helped to promote his peaceable intentions. They fought by torch-light in the grove; Taylor was run through the body, but lived seven years after, at which time his wound breaking out afresh, it caused his death. Clarke from that time pretended to be a Quaker, but the orthodox brethren never cordially received him among their number; and he died at London, about eighteen years after, in poverty and contrition. From that time it was thought necessary to forbid the wearing of swords at Bath, as they often tore the ladies' clothes, and frighted them, by sometimes appearing upon trifling occasions. Whenever, therefore, Nash heard of a challenge given or accepted, he instantly had both parties arrested. The gentlemen's boots also

* [Catherine Hyde, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon, and wife of Charles Douglass, Duke of Queensbury; a famous beauty, celebrated by Prior in the pretty poem which begins "Thus Kitty beautiful and young;" and often mentioned in Swift's and Pope's letters. She was forbid the court, for promoting subscriptions to the second part of the Beggar's Opera, when it had been prohibited from being acted. She and the Duke erected the monument to Gay in Westminster Abbey.]

Digitized by Google

made a very desperate stand against him; the country 'squires were by no means submissive to his usurpations, and probably his authority alone would never have carried him through, had he not reinforced it with ridicule. He wrote a song upon the occasion, which, for the honor of his poetical talents, the world shall see.

FRONTINELLA'S INVITATION TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Come, one and all, to Hoyden Hall,
For there's the assembly this night;
None but prude fools,
Mind manners and rules;
We Hoydens do decency slight.

Come, trollops and slatterns,
Cocked hats and white aprons,
This best our modesty suits;
For why should not we,
In dress be as free,
As Hogs-Norton 'squires in boots.

The keenness, severity, and particularly the good rhymes of this little *morceau*, which was at that time highly relished by many of the nobility at Bath, gained him a temporary triumph. But to push his victories, he got up a puppet-show, in which Punch came in booted and spurred, in the character of a country 'squire. He was introduced as courting his mistress, and having obtained her consent to comply with his wishes, upon going to bed, he is desired to pull off his boots. "My boots!" replies Punch, "why, madam, you may as well bid me pull off my legs. I never go without boots; I never ride, I never dance, without them, and this piece of politeness is quite the thing at Bath. We always dance at our town in boots, and the ladies often move minuets in riding-hoods." Thus he goes on, till his mistress, grown impatient, kicks him off the stage.

Digitized by Google

From that time few ventured to be seen at the assemblies in Bath in a riding-dress; and whenever any gentleman, through ignorance or haste, appeared in the rooms in boots, Nash would make up to him, and bowing in an arch manner, would tell him, that he had "forgot his horse." Thus he was at last completely victorious.

"Dolisque coacti
Quos neque Tydides nec Larissæus Achilles
Non anni domuere decem."

He began therefore to reign without a rival, and like other kings had his mistresses, flatterers, enemies, and calumniators. The amusements of the place, however, wore a very different aspect from what they did formerly. Regularity repressed pride, and that lessened, people of fortune became fit for society. Let the morose and grave censure an attention to forms and ceremonies, and rail at those whose only business it is to regulate them; but, though ceremony is very different from politeness, no country was ever yet polite that was not first ceremonious. The natural gradation of breeding begins in savage disgust, proceeds to indifference, improves into attention, by degrees refines into ceremonious observance; and the trouble of being ceremonious at length produces politeness, elegance, and ease. There is, therefore, some merit in mending society, even in one of the inferior steps of this gradation; and no man was more happy in this respect than Nash. In every nation there are enough who have no other business or care but that of buying pleasure; and he taught them who bid at such an auction, the art of procuring what they sought, without diminishing the pleasure of others.

The city of Bath, by such assiduity, soon became the theatre of summer amusements for all people of fashion; and the man-

Digitized by Google

ner of spending the day there must amuse any but such as disease or spleen had made uneasy to themselves. The following is a faint picture of the pleasures that scene affords. Upon a stranger's arrival at Bath he is welcomed by a peal of the Abbey bells, and in the next place, by the voice and music of the city waits. For these civilities, the ringers have generally a present made them of half a guinea, and the waits of half a crown, or more, in proportion to the person's fortune, generosity, or ostentation. These customs, though disagreeable, are however liked, or they would not continue. The greatest incommodity attending them is the disturbance the bells must give the sick. But the pleasure of knowing the name of every family that comes to town recompenses the inconvenience. Invalids are fond of news, and upon the first sound of the bells, every body sends out to inquire for whom they ring.*

After the family is thus welcomed to Bath, it is the custom for the master of it to go to the public places, and subscribe two guineas at the assembly-houses towards the balls and music in the pump-house, for which he is entitled to three tickets every ball night. His next subscription is a crown, half a guinea, or a

* ["No city, dear mother, this city excels
In charming sweet sounds both of fiddles and bells.
I thought, like a fool, that they only would ring
For a wedding, or judge, or the birth of a king;
But I found 'twas for me, that the good-natur'd people
Rung so hard, that I thought they would pull down the steeple;
So I took out my purse, as I hate to be shabby,
And paid all the men when they came from the Abbey.
Yet some think it strange they should make such a riot,
In a place where sick folk would be glad to be quiet:
If a broker, or salesman, a gamester, or peer,
A naturaliz'd Jew, or a bishop comes here;
Or an eminent trader in cheese should retire
Just to think of the bus'ness the state may require,
With horns and with trumpets, with fiddles and drums,
They'll strive to divert him as soon as he comes:
'Tis amazing they find such a number of ways
Of employing his thoughts all the time that he stays!"

ANSTEY, *New Bath Guide.*

Digitized by Google

guinea, according to his rank and quality, for the liberty of walking in the private walks belonging to Simpson's assembly-house; a crown or half a guinea is also given to the booksellers, for which the gentleman is to have what books he pleases to read at his lodgings. And at the coffee-house another subscription is taken for pen, ink, and paper, for such letters as the subscriber shall write at it during his stay. The ladies, too, may subscribe to the booksellers, and to a house by the pump-room, for the advantage of reading the news, and for enjoying each other's conversation.

Things being thus adjusted, the amusements of the day are generally begun by bathing, which is no unpleasing method of passing away an hour or so.

The hours for bathing are commonly between six and nine in the morning, and the baths are every morning supplied with fresh water; for when the people have done bathing, the sluices in each bath are pulled up, and the water is carried off by drains into the river Avon.

In the morning the lady is brought in a close chair, dressed in her bathing clothes,* to the bath; and, being in the water, the woman who attends presents her with a little floating dish like a basin; into which the lady puts a handkerchief, a snuff-box, and a nosegay. She then traverses the bath; if a novice with a guide, if otherwise, by herself;† and having amused her-

* ["This morning, dear mother, as soon as 'twas light
I was wak'd by a noise that astonish'd me quite;
For in Tabitha's chamber I heard such a clatter,
I could not conceive what the deuce was the matter.
And, would you believe! I went up and found her,
In a blanket with two lusty fellows around her,
Who both seem'd a going to carry her off in
A little black box just the size of a coffin!
'And pray,' says I, 'Tabitha, what is your drift,
To be cover'd in flannel instead of a shift.'"—ANSTEY.]

† ["And of all the fine sights I have seen, my dear mother,
I never expect to behold such another:

Digitized by Google

self thus while she thinks proper, calls for her chair and returns to her lodgings.

The amusement of bathing is immediately succeeded by a general assembly of people at the pump-room; some for pleasure, and some to drink the hot waters. Three glasses, at three different times, is the usual portion for every drinker; and the intervals between every glass* are enlivened by the harmony of a small band of music, as well as by the conversation of the gay, the witty, or the forward.

From the pump-room the ladies, from time to time, withdraw to a female coffee-house, and from thence return to their lodgings to breakfast. The gentlemen withdraw to their coffee-houses, to read the papers, or converse on the news of the day, with a freedom and ease not to be found in the metropolis.

People of fashion make public breakfasts at the assembly-houses, to which they invite their acquaintances, and they sometimes order private concerts; or, when so disposed, attend lectures on the arts and sciences, which are frequently taught there in a

How the ladies did giggle and set up their clacks,
All the while an old woman was rubbing their backs!
'Twas a glorious sight to behold the fair sex
All wading with gentlemen up to their necks,
And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl
In a great smoking kettle as big as our hall."—ANSTEY."]

* ["Ods, bobs! how delighted I was unawares,
With the fiddles I heard in the room above stairs:
For music is wholesome, the doctors all think,
For ladies that bathe, and ladies that drink;
And that's the opinion of Robin our driver,
Who whistles his nags while they stand at the river:
They say it is right that for every glass
A tune you should take that the water may pass."—*Ibid.*

"Dr. Johnson asked me many questions that led to a general description of Bath. He seemed very well pleased; but remarked that men and women bathing together, as they do at Bath, is an instance of barbarity that he believed could not be paralleled in any part of the world."—*Boswell's Johnson*, vol. ix. p. 259, ed. 1835.]

Digitized by Google

pretty superficial manner, so as not to tease the understanding, while they afford the imagination some amusement. The private concerts are performed in the ball-rooms; the tickets a crown each.

Concert breakfasts at the assembly-house sometimes make also a part of the morning's amusement here, the expenses of which are defrayed by a subscription among the men. Persons of rank and fortune who can perform are admitted into the orchestra, and find a pleasure in joining the performers.

Thus we have the tedious morning fairly over. When noon approaches, and church (if any please to go there) is done, some of the company appear upon the parade, and other public walks, where they continue to chat and amuse each other, till they have formed parties for the play, cards, or dancing for the evening Another part of the company divert themselves with reading in the booksellers' shops, or are generally seen taking the air or exercise, some on horseback, some in coaches. Some walk in the meadows round the town, winding along the side of the river Avon and the neighboring canal; while others are seen scaling some of those romantic precipices that overhang the city.

When the hour of dinner draws nigh, and the company are returned from their different recreations, the provisions are genearlly served with the utmost elegance and plenty. Their mutton, butter, fish, and fowl, are all allowed to be excellent, and their cookery still exceeds their meat.

After dinner is over, and evening prayers ended, the company meet a second time at the pump-room. From this they retire to the walks, and from thence go to drink tea at the assembly-houses, and the rest of the evenings are concluded either with balls, plays, or visits. A theatre was erected in the year 1705, by subscription, by people of the highest rank, who permitted their arms to be engraven on the inside of the house, as a public testimony of

Digitized by Google

their liberality towards it. Every Tuesday and Friday evening is concluded with a public ball, the contributions to which are so numerous, that the price of each ticket is trifling. Thus Bath yields a continued rotation of diversions, and people of all ways of thinking, even from the libertine to the Methodist, have it in their power to complete the day with employments suited to their inclinations.

In this manner every amusement soon improved under Nash's administration. The magistrates of the city found that he was necessary and useful, and took every opportunity of paying the same respect to his fictitious royalty, that is generally extorted by real power. The same satisfaction a young lady finds upon being singled out at her first appearance, or an applauded poet on the success of his first tragedy, influenced him. All admired him as an extraordinary character; and some who knew no better, as a very fine gentleman. He was perfectly happy in their little applause, and affected at length something particular in his dress, behavior, and conversation.

His equipage was sumptuous, and he usually travelled to Tunbridge in a post chariot and six grays, with outriders, footmen, French-horns, and every other appendage of expensive parade. He always wore a white hat; and, to apologize for this singularity, said, he did it purely to secure it from being stolen: his dress was tawdry, though not perfectly genteel; he might be considered as a beau of several generations, and in his appearance he, in some measure, mixed the fashions of the last age with those of the present. He perfectly understood elegant expense, and generally passed his time in the very best company, if persons of the first distinction deserve that title.

But I hear the reader now demand, what finances were to support all this finery, or where the treasures that gave him such frequent opportunities of displaying his benevolence, or his vanity?

Digitized by Google

To answer this, we must now enter upon another part of his character,—his talents as a gamester; for by gaming alone, at that period of which I speak, he kept up so very genteel an appearance. When he first figured at Bath, there were few laws against this destructive amusement. The gaming-table was the constant resource of despair and indigence, and frequent ruin of opulent fortunes. Wherever people of fashion came, needy adventurers were generally found in waiting. With such Bath swarmed; and among this class Nash was certainly to be numbered in the beginning, only with this difference, that he wanted the corrupt heart, too commonly attending a life of expedients; for he was generous, humane, and honorable, even though by profession a gamester.

A thousand instances might be given of his integrity, even in this infamous profession, where his generosity often impelled him to act in contradiction to his interest. Wherever he found a novice in the hands of a sharper, he generally forewarned him of the danger; whenever he found any inclined to play, yet ignorant of the game, he would offer his services, and play for them. I remember an instance to this effect, though too nearly concerned in the affair to publish the gentleman's name of whom it is related. In the year 1725, there came to Bath a giddy youth, who had just resigned his fellowship at Oxford. He brought his whole fortune with him there; it was but a trifle; however, he was resolved to venture it all. Good fortune seemed kinder than could be expected. Without the smallest skill in play, he won a sum sufficient to make any unambitious man happy. His desire of gain increasing with his gains, in the October following he was at all, and added four thousand pounds to his former capital. Nash, one night, after losing a considerable sum to this undeserving son of fortune, invited him to supper. "Sir," cried this honest, though veteran gamester, "perhaps you may imagine I have invited you, in order to have my revenge at home; but I scorn

Digitized by Google

so inhospitable an action. I desired the favor of your company to give you some advice which, you will pardon me, sir, you seem to stand in need of. You are now in high spirits, and drawn away by a torrent of success; but there will come a time, when you will repent having left the calm of a college life for the turbulent profession of a gamester. Ill runs will come, as sure as the day and night succeed each other. Be therefore advised, remain content with your present gains; for be persuaded, that had you the bank of England, with your present ignorance of gaming, it would vanish like a fairy dream. You are a stranger to me; but to convince you of the part I take in your welfare, I'll give you fifty guineas, to forfeit twenty, every time you lose two hundred at one sitting." The young gentleman refused his offer, and was at last undone!

The Duke of B.* being chagrined at losing a considerable sum, pressed Nash to tie him up for the future from playing deep. Accordingly, the beau gave his Grace a hundred guineas to forfeit ten thousand, whenever he lost a sum to the same amount at play, at one sitting. The duke loved play to distraction, and soon after, at hazard, lost eight thousand guineas, and was going to throw for three thousand more; when Nash, catching hold of the dice-box, entreated his Grace to reflect upon the penalty if he lost; the Duke for that time desisted; but so strong was the *furor* of play upon him, that soon after, losing a considerable sum at Newmarket, he was contented to pay the penalty.†

When the late Earl of T—— was a youth, he was passion-

* [Charles Powlett, third Duke of Bolton. His second wife was Miss Lavinia Fenton, the actress, who became celebrated in the character of Polly, in the Beggar's Opera. He died in 1754.]

† ["Feb. 9, 1732. A certain Duke paid £5,000 to Beau Nash, and agreed to allow him £400 per annum during life, in lieu of £10,000 he was to pay, in case the said nobleman should lose at hazard above £2,000 at one sitting; which he did in October last at Newmarket."—*Gent. Mag.* vol. ii. p. 627.]

Digitized by Google

ately fond of play, and never better pleased than with having Nash for his antagonist. Nash saw with concern his lordship's foible, and undertook to cure him, though by a very disagreeable remedy. Conscious of his own superior skill, he determined to engage him in single play for a very considerable sum. His lordship, in proportion as he lost his game, lost his temper too; and as he approached the gulf, seemed still more eager for ruin. He lost his estate: some writings were put into the winner's possession; his very equipage was deposited as a last stake, and he lost that also. But when our generous gamester found his lordship sufficiently punished for his temerity, he returned all; only stipulating, that he should be paid five thousand pounds whenever he should think proper to make the demand. However, he never made any such demand during his lordship's life; but some time after his decease, Nash's affairs being in the wane, he demanded the money of his lordship's heirs, who honorably paid it without any hesitation.

But whatever skill Nash might have acquired by long practice in play, he was never formed by nature for a successful gamester. He was constitutionally passionate and generous. To acquire a perfection in that art, a man must be naturally phlegmatic, reserved, and cool; every passion must learn to obey control; but he frequently was unable to restrain the violence of his, and was often betrayed by this means into unbecoming rudeness, or childish impertinence; was sometimes a minion of fortune, and as often depressed by adversity. While others made considerable fortunes at the gaming-table, he was ever in the power of chance; nor did even the intimacy with which he was received by the great, place him in a state of independence.

The considerable inconveniences that were found to result from a permission of gaming, at length attracted the attention of the legislature, and in the twelfth year of George II. the

Digitized by Google

most prevalent games at that time were declared fraudulent and unlawful. Every age has had its peculiar modes of gaming. The games of gleek, primero, in-and-in, and several others now exploded, employed our sharping ancestors; to these succeeded the ace of hearts, pharaoh, basset, and hazard, all games of chance like the former. But though in these the chances seemed equal to the novice, in general those who kept the bank were considerable winners. The act, therefore, passed upon this occasion, declared all such games and lotteries illicit, and directed, that all who should set up such games should forfeit two hundred pounds, to be levied by distress on the offender's goods; one third to go to the informer, the residue to the poor. The act further declared, that every person who played in any place, except in the royal palace where his majesty resided, should forfeit fifty pounds, and should be condemned to pay treble costs in case of an appeal.

This law was scarcely made, before it was eluded by the invention of divers fraudulent and deceitful games; and a particular game, called passage, was daily practised, and contributed to the ruin of thousands. To prevent this, the ensuing year it was enacted, that this and every other game invented, or to be invented with one die, or more, or any other instrument of the same nature, with numbers thereon, should be subject to a similar penalty; and at the same time, the persons playing with such instruments should be punished as above.

This amendment of the law soon gave birth to new evasions; the game of rolly-polly, Marlborough's battles, but particularly the E O, were set up; and, strange to observe! several of those very noblemen who had given their voices to suppress gaming were the most ready to encourage it. This game was at first set up at Tunbridge. It was invented by one Cook, and carried on between him and the proprietor of the assembly-room at that

Digitized by Google

place; and was reckoned extremely profitable to the bank, as it gained two and a half per cent. on all that was lost or won.

As all gaming was suppressed but this, Nash was now utterly destitute of any resource that he could expect from his superior skill and long experience in the art. The money to be gained in private gaming is at best but trifling, and the opportunity precarious. The minds of the generality of mankind shrink with their circumstances; and Nash, upon the immediate prospect of poverty, was now mean enough (I will call it no worse) to enter into a confederacy with those low creatures to evade the law, and to share the plunder. The occasion was as follows. The profits of the table were, as I observed, divided between Cook the inventor, and the room-keeper. The first year's profits were extraordinary, and the said room-keeper now began to wish himself sole proprietor. The combinations of the worthless are ever of short duration. The next year, therefore, the room-keeper turned Cook out of his room, and set up the game for himself. The gentlemen and ladies who frequented the wells, unmindful of the immense profit gained by these reptiles, still continued to game as before; and the keeper was triumphing in the success of his politics, when he was informed, that Cook and his friends had hired the crier to cry the game down. The consequences of this would have been fatal to the keeper's interest; for by this means frauds might have been discovered, which would deter even the most ardent lovers of play. Immediately, therefore, while the crier was yet upon the walks, he applied to Nash to stop these proceedings, and at the same time offered him a fourth share of the bank, which Nash was mean enough to accept. This is the greatest blot in his life; and this, it is hoped, will find pardon.

The day after, the inventor offered one-half of the bank; but this Nash thought proper to refuse, being pre-engaged to the

Digitized by Google

room-keeper. Upon which, being disappointed, he applied to an associate, and under his protection another table was set up, and the company seemed to be divided equally between them. I cannot reflect without surprise at the folly of the gentlemen and ladies, in suffering themselves to be thus parcelled out between a pack of sharpers, and to be defrauded of their money, without even the show of opposition. The company thus divided, Nash once more availed himself of their parties, and prevailed upon them to unite their banks, and to divide the gains into three shares, of which he reserved one to himself.

Nash had hitherto enjoyed a fluctuating fortune; and had he taken the advantage of the present opportunity, he might have been for the future not only above want, but even in circumstances of opulence. Had he cautiously employed himself in computing the benefits of the table, and exacting his stipulated share, he might have soon grown rich; but he entirely left the management of it to the people of the rooms; he took them (as he says in one of his memorials upon this occasion) to be honest, and never inquired what was won or lost; and it is probable they were seldom assiduous in informing him. I find a secret pleasure in thus displaying the insecurity of friendships among the base. They pretended to pay him regularly at first; but he soon discovered, as he says, that at Tunbridge he had suffered to the amount of two thousand guineas.

In the mean time, as the E O table thus succeeded at Tunbridge, Nash was resolved to introduce it at Bath, and previously asked the opinion of several lawyers, who declared it no way illegal. In consequence of this, he wrote to a female who kept one of the great rooms at Bath, acquainting her with the profits attending such a scheme, and proposing to have a fourth share with her, and the proprietor of the other room, for his authority, and protection. To this application they both returned him for

Digitized by Google

answer, that they would grant him a fifth share; which he consented to accept. Accordingly, he made a journey to London, and bespoke two tables, one for each room, at the rate of fifteen pounds each table.

The tables were no sooner set up at Bath, than they were frequented by a greater concourse of gamesters than those at Tunbridge. Men of that infamous profession, from every part of the kingdom, and even other parts of Europe, flocked here to feed on the ruins of each other's fortune. This afforded another opportunity for Nash to become rich; but, as at Tunbridge, he thought the people here also would take care of him, and therefore he employed none to look after his interest. The first year they paid him what he thought just; the next, the woman of the room dying, her son paid him, and showed his books. Some time after the people of the rooms offered him one hundred pounds a year each for his share, which he refused; every succeeding year they continued to pay him less, until at length he found, as he pretends, that he had thus lost not less than twenty thousand pounds.

Thus they proceeded, deceiving the public and each other, until the legislature thought proper to suppress these seminaries of vice. It was enacted, that after the 24th of June 1745, none should be permitted to keep a house, room or place, for playing, upon pain of such forfeitures as were declared in former acts instituted for that purpose.

The legislature likewise amended a law, made in the reign of queen Anne, for recovering money lost at play, on the oath of the winner. By this act, no person was rendered incapable of being a witness; and every person present at the gaming-table might be summoned by the magistrate who took cognizance of the affair. No privilege of parliament was allowed to those convicted of having gaming-tables in their houses. Those who lost

Digitized by Google

ten pounds at one time were liable to be indicted within six months after the offence was committed; and being convicted, were to be fined five times the value of the sum won or lost, for the use of the poor. Any offender, before conviction, discovering another, so as to be convicted, was to be discharged from the penalties incurred by his own offences.

By this wise and just act, all Nash's future hopes of succeeding by the tables were blown up. He had now only the justice and generosity of his confederates to trust to; but that he soon found to be a vain expectation; for, if we can depend on his own memorials, what at one time they confessed they would at another deny; and though upon some occasions they seemed at variance with each other, yet when they were to oppose him, whom they considered as a common enemy, they generally united with confidence and success. He now therefore had nothing but a lawsuit to confide in for redress; and this is ever the last expedient to retrieve a desperate fortune. He accordingly threw his suit into Chancery, and by this means the public became acquainted with what he had long endeavored to conceal. They now found that he was himself concerned in the gaming-tables, of which he only seemed the conductor; and that he had shared part of the spoil, though he complained of having been defrauded of a just share.

The success of his suit was what might have been naturally expected; he had but at best a bad cause, and as the oaths of the defendants were alone sufficient to cast him in Chancery, it was not surprising that he was nonsuited. But the consequence of this affair was much more fatal than he had imagined: it lessened him in the esteem of the public; it drew several enemies against him, and in some measure diminished the authority of any defence he could make. From that time (about the year 1745) I find this good-natured but misguided man involved in continual disputes,

Digitized by Google

every day calumniated with some new slander, and continually endeavoring to obviate its effects.

Upon these occasions his usual method was, by printed bills handed about among his acquaintance, to inform the public of his most private transactions with some of those creatures, with whom he had formerly associated; but these apologies served rather to blacken his antagonists than to vindicate himself. They were in general extremely ill written, confused, obscure, and sometimes unintelligible. By these, however, it appeared that Willshire was originally obliged to him for the resort of company to his room; that lady H., who had all the company before Willshire's room was built, offered Nash a hundred pounds for his protection; which he refused, having previously promised to support Mrs. Willshire. It appears by these apologies, that the persons concerned in the rooms made large fortunes, while Nash still continued in pristine indigence; and that his nephew, for whom he had at first secured one of the rooms, was left in as great distress as himself.

His enemies were not upon this occasion contented with aspersing him, as a confederate with sharpers; they even asserted, that he embezzled the subscriptions of gentlemen and ladies, which were given for useful or charitable purposes. But to such aspersions he answered by declaring, to use his own expression, before God and man, that he never diverted one shilling of the said subscriptions to his own use; nor was he ever thought to have done it till new enemies started up against him.

Nash's simplicity, in trusting persons whom he had no previous reasons to place confidence in, seems to be one of those lights into his character, which, while they impeach his understanding, do honor to his benevolence. The low and timid are ever suspicious; but a heart impressed with honorable sentiments, expects from others sympathetic sincerity.

Digitized by Google

But now that we have viewed his conduct as a gamester, and seen him on that side of his character, let me turn to those brighter parts, which gained him the affection of his friends, the esteem of the corporation which he assisted, and may possibly attract the attention of posterity. By his successes we shall find, that figuring in life proceeds less from the possession of great talents, than from the proper application of moderate ones. Some great minds are only fitted to put forth their powers in the storm, and the occasion is often wanting during a whole life for a great exertion; but trifling opportunities of shining are almost every hour offered to the little sedulous mind, and a person thus employed, is not only more pleasing but more useful in a state of tranquil society.

Though gaming first introduced him nto polite company, this alone could hardly have carried him forward, without the assistance of a genteel address, much vivacity, some humor, and some wit. But, once admitted into the circle of the beau monde, he then laid claim to all the privileges by which it is distinguished. Among others, in the early part of his life, he entered himself professedly into the service of the fair sex; he set up for a man of gallantry and intrigue; and, if we can credit the boasts of his old age, he often succeeded. In fact, the business of love somewhat resembles the business of physic; no matter for qualifications, he that makes vigorous pretensions to either is surest of success. Nature had by no means formed Nash for a *beau garçon;* his person was clumsy, too large and awkward, and his features harsh, strong, and peculiarly irregular; yet even with those disadvantages, he made love, became a universal admirer of the sex, and was universally admired. He was possessed, at least, of some requisites of a lover. He had assiduity, flattery, fine clothes, and as much wit as the ladies he addressed. Wit, flattery, and fine clothes, he used to say, were enough to debauch

Digitized by Google

a nunnery. But my fair readers of the present day are exempt from this scandal; and it is no matter now, what he said of their grandmothers.

As Nestor was a man of three ages, so Nash sometimes humorously called himself a beau of three generations. He had seen flaxen bobs succeeded by majors, which in their turn gave way to negligents, which were at last totally routed by bags and ramilies. The manner in which gentlemen managed their amours in these different ages of fashion, was not more different than their periwigs. The lover in the reign of King Charles was solemn, majestic and formal. He visited his mistress in state; languished for the favor, kneeled when he toasted his goddess, walked with solemnity, performed the most trifling things with decorum, and even took snuff with a flourish. The beau of the latter part of queen Anne's reign was disgusted with so much formality; he was pert, smart and lively; his billets-doux were written in a quite different style from that of his antiquated predecessor; he was ever laughing at his own ridiculous situation; till at last, he persuaded the lady to become as ridiculous as himself. The beau of the third age, in which Nash died, was still more extraordinary than either; his whole secret in intrigue consisted in perfect indifference. The only way to make love now, I have heard Nash say, was to take no manner of notice of the lady; which method was found the surest way to secure her affections.

However these things be, this gentleman's amours were in reality very much confined in the second and third age of intrigue; his character was too public for a lady to consign her reputation to his keeping. But in the beginning of life, it is said, he knew the secret history of the times, and contributed himself to swell the page of scandal. Were I upon the present occasion to hold the pen of a a novelist, I could recount some amours, in which he was successful. I could fill a volume with

Digitized by Google

little anecdotes which contain neither pleasure nor instruction; with histories of professing lovers, and poor believing girls deceived by such professions. But such adventures are easily written, and as easily achieved. The plan even of fictitious novel is quite exhausted; but truth, which I have followed here, and ever design to follow, presents in the affair of love scarce any variety. The manner in which one reputation is lost, exactly resembles that by which another is taken away. The gentleman begins at timid distance, grows more bold, becomes rude, till the lady is married or undone; such is the substance of every modern novel; nor will I gratify the pruriency of folly at the expense of every other pleasure my narration may afford.

Beau Nash did not long continue a universal gallant; but in the earlier years of his reign, entirely gave up his endeavors to deceive the sex, in order to become the honest protector of their innocence, the guardian of their reputation, and a friend to their virtue. This was a character he bore for many years, and supported it with integrity, assiduity, and success. It was his constant practice to do every thing in his power to prevent the fatal consequences of rash and inconsiderate love; and there are many persons now alive, who owe their present happiness to his having interrupted the progress of an amour that threatened to become unhappy, or even criminal, by privately making their guardians or parents acquainted with what he could discover.*

I shall beg leave to give a few instances of Nash's good-

* ["The gods, their peculiar favor to show,
Sent Hermes to Bath in the shape of a BEAU:
Long reigned the great NASH, this omnipotent lord,
Respected by youth, and by parents adored;
For him not enough at a ball to preside,
The unwary and beautiful nymph would he guide:
Oft tell her a tale, how the credulous maid
By man, by perfidious man, is betray'd;
Taught charity's hand to relieve the distrest,
While tears have his tender compassion expresst."]—ANSTEY.

Digitized by Google

nature on these occasions, as I have had the accounts from himself. At the conclusion of the treaty of peace at Utrecht, Colonel M. was one of the thoughtless, agreeable, gay creatures, that drew the attention of the company at Bath. He danced and talked with great vivacity; and when he gamed among the ladies, he showed that his attention was employed rather upon their hearts than their fortunes. His own fortune, however, was a trifle, when compared to the elegance of his expense; and his imprudence at last was so great, that it obliged him to sell an annuity arising from his commission, to keep up his splendor a little longer.

However thoughtless he might be, he had the happiness of gaining the affections of Miss L., whose father designed her a very large fortune. This lady was courted by a nobleman of distinction; but she refused his addresses, resolved upon gratifying rather her inclinations than her avarice. The intrigue went on successfully between her and the colonel, and they both would certainly have been married and undone, had not Nash apprised her father of their intentions. The old gentleman recalled his daughter from Bath, and offered Nash a very considerable present for the care he had taken, which he refused.

In the mean time Colonel M. had an intimation how his intrigue came to be discovered, and by taxing Nash, found that his suspicions were not without foundation. A challenge was the immediate consequence, which the king of Bath, conscious of only having done his duty, thought proper to decline. As none are permitted to wear swords at Bath, the colonel found no opportunity of gratifying his resentment, and waited with impatience to find Nash in town, to require proper satisfaction.

During this interval, however, he found his creditors become too importunate for him to remain longer at Bath; and his finances and credit being quite exhausted, he took the desperate

Digitized by Google

resolution of going over to the Dutch army in Flanders, where he enlisted himself a volunteer. Here he underwent all the fatigues of a private sentinel, with the additional misery of receiving no pay, and his friends in England gave out that he was shot at a certain battle.

In the mean time, the nobleman pressed his passion with ardor; but during the progress of his amour, the young lady's father died, and left her heiress to a fortune of fifteen hundred a year. She thought herself now disengaged from her former passion. An absence of two years had in some measure abated her love for the colonel; and the assiduity, the merit, and real regard of the gentleman who still continued to solicit her, were almost too powerful for her constancy. Nash, in the mean time, took every opportunity of inquiring after Colonel M., and found that he had for some time been returned to England, but had changed his name, in order to avoid the fury of his creditors, and was entered into a company of strolling players, at that time exhibiting at Peterborough.

He now therefore thought he owed the colonel, in justice, an opportunity of promoting his fortune, as he had once deprived him of an occasion of satisfying his love. Our beau, therefore, invited the lady to be of a party to Peterborough, and offered his own equipage, which was then one of the most elegant in England, to conduct her there. The proposal being accepted, the lady, the nobleman, and Nash arrived in town just as the players were going to begin.

Colonel M., who used every means of remaining incognito, and who was too proud to make his distresses known to any of his former acquaintance, was now degraded into the character of Tom in the "Conscious Lovers." Miss L. was placed in the foremost row of the spectators, her lord on one side, and the impatient Nash on the other, when the unhappy youth appeared in

Digitized by Google

that despicable situation upon the stage. The moment he came on, his former mistress struck his view; but his amazement was increased when he saw her fainting away in the arms of those who sat behind her. He was incapable of proceeding, and scarcely knowing what he did, he flew and caught her in his arms.

"Colonel," cried Nash, when they were in some measure recovered, "you once thought me your enemy, because I endeavored to prevent you both from ruining each other; you were then wrong, and you have long had my forgiveness. If you love well enough now for matrimony, you fairly have my consent, and confusion to him that attempts to part you." Their nuptials were solemnized soon after, and affluence added a zest to all their future enjoyments. Nash had the thanks of each, and he afterwards spent several agreeable days in that society which he had contributed to render happy.

I shall beg the reader's patience, while I give another instance, in which he ineffectually offered his assistance and advice. This story is not from himself, but told us partly by Mr. Wood, the architect of Bath,* as it fell particularly within his own knowledge, and partly from another memoir to which he refers.

Miss Sylvia S—— was descended from one of the best families in the kingdom, and was left a large fortune upon her sister's decease. She had early in life been introduced into the best company, and contracted a passion for elegance and expense. It is usual to make the heroine of a story very witty and very beautiful, and such circumstances are so surely expected, that they are scarce attended to. But whatever the finest poet

* [See Wood's History of Bath, vol. ii. p. 446. The lady's real name was Fanny Braddock. See Gent. Mag. vol. i. p. 397.]

Digitized by Google

could conceive of wit, or the most celebrated painter imagine of beauty, were excelled in the perfections of this young lady. Her superiority in both was allowed by all who either heard or had seen her. She was naturally gay, generous to a fault, good-natured to the highest degree, affable in conversation, and some of her letters and other writings, as well in verse as prose, would have shone amongst those of the most celebrated wits of this, or any other age, had they been published.

But these great qualifications were marked by another, which lessened the value of them all. She was imprudent. But let it not be imagined that her reputation or honor suffered by her imprudence: I only mean, she had no knowledge of the use of money; she relieved distress by putting herself into the circumstances of the object whose wants she supplied.

She was arrived at the age of nineteen, when the crowd of her lovers and the continual repetition of new flattery had taught her to think she could never be forsaken, and never poor. Young ladies are apt to expect a certainty of success from a number of lovers; and yet I have seldom seen a girl courted by a hundred lovers that found a husband in any. Before the choice is fixed, she has either lost her reputation or her good sense; and the loss of either is sufficient to consign her to perpetual virginity.

Among the number of this young lady's lovers was the celebrated S—, who, at that time, went by the name of "the good-natured man." This gentleman, with talents that might have done honor to humanity, suffered himself to fall at length into the lowest state of debasement. He followed the dictates of every newest passion; his love, his pity, his generosity, and even his friendships were all in excess; he was unable to make head against any of his sensations or desires, but they were in general worthy wishes and desires, for he was constitutionally virtuous.

Digitized by Google

This gentleman, who at last died in a jail, was at that time this lady's envied favorite.

It is probable that he, thoughtless creature, had no other prospect from this amour but that of passing the present moments agreeably. He only courted dissipation, but the lady's thoughts were fixed on happiness. At length, however, his debts amounting to a considerable sum, he was arrested and thrown into prison. He endeavored at first to conceal his situation from his beautiful mistress; but she soon came to a knowledge of his distress, and took the fatal resolution of freeing him from confinement by discharging all the demands of his creditors.

Nash was at that time in London, and represented to the thoughtless young lady, that such a measure would effectually ruin both; that so warm a concern for the interests of Mr. S— would in the first place quite impair her fortune in the eyes of our sex, and what was worse, lessen her reputation in those of her own. He added that thus bringing Mr. S— from prison would be only a temporary relief; that a mind so generous as his would become bankrupt under the load of gratitude; and instead of improving in friendship or affection, he would only study to avoid a creditor he could never repay; that though small favors produce good-will, great ones destroy friendship. These admonitions, however, were disregarded, and she found, too late, the prudence and truth of her adviser. In short, her fortune was by this means exhausted; and, with all her attractions, she found her acquaintance began to disesteem her in proportion as she became poor.

In this situation she accepted Nash's invitation of returning to Bath: He promised to introduce her to the best company there, and he was assured that her merit would do the rest. Upon her very first appearance, ladies of the highest distinction courted her friendship and esteem; but a settled melancholy had

Digitized by Google

taken possession of her mind, and no amusements that they could propose were sufficient to divert it. Yet still, as if from habit, she followed the crowd in its levities, and frequented those places where all persons endeavor to forget themselves in the bustle of ceremony and show.

Her beauty, her simplicity, and her unguarded situation soon drew the attention of a designing wretch, who at that time kept one of the rooms at Bath, and who thought that this lady's merit, properly managed, might turn to good account. This woman's name was Lindsey, a creature who, though vicious, was in appearance sanctified, and, though designing, had some wit and humor. She began by the humblest assiduity to ingratiate herself with Miss S—; showed that she could be amusing as a companion, and, by frequent offers of money, proved that she could be useful as a friend. Thus by degrees she gained an entire ascendency over this poor, thoughtless, deserted girl; and in less than one year, namely about 1727, Miss S—, without ever transgressing the laws of virtue, had entirely lost her reputation. Whenever a person was wanting to make up a party for play at Dame Lindsey's, Sylvia, as she was then familiarly called, was sent for, and was obliged to suffer all those slights which the rich but too often let fall upon their inferiors in point of fortune.

In most, even the greatest minds, the heart at last becomes level with the meanness of its condition; but in this charming girl, it struggled hard with adversity, and yielded to every encroachment of contempt with sullen reluctance. But though in the course of three years she was in the very eye of public inspection, yet Mr. Wood, the architect, avers, that he could never, by the strictest observations, perceive her to be tainted with any other vice than that of suffering herself to be decoyed to the gaming-table, and at her own hazard playing for the amusement and advantage of others. Her friend Nash, therefore,

Digitized by Google

thought proper to induce her to break off all connections with Dame Lindsey, and to rent part of Mr. Wood's house, in Queen square, where she behaved with the utmost complaisance, regularity, and virtue.

In this situation, her detestation of life still continued. She found that time would infallibly deprive her of part of her attractions, and that continual solicitude would impair the rest. With these reflections she would frequently entertain herself and an old faithful maid in the vales of Bath, whenever the weather would permit them to walk out. She would even sometimes start questions in company, with seeming unconcern, in order to know what act of suicide was easiest, and which was attended with the smallest pain. When tired with exercise, she generally retired to meditation, and she became habituated to early hours of sleep and rest; but when the weather prevented her usual exercise, and her sleep was thus more difficult, she made it a rule to rise from her bed, and walk about her chamber, till she began to find an inclination for repose.

This custom made it necessary for her to order a candle to be kept burning all night in her room; and the maid usually, when she withdrew, locked the chamber door, and pushing the key under it beyond reach, her mistress, by that constant method, lay undisturbed till seven o'clock in the morning, when she arose, unlocked the door, and rang the bell as a signal for the maid to return.

This state of seeming piety, regularity, and prudence continued for some time, till the gay, celebrated, toasted Miss Sylvia was sunk into a housekeeper to the gentleman at whose house she lived. She was unable to keep company, for want of the elegancies of dress, which are the usual passports among the polite; and was too haughty to seem to want them. The fashionable, the amusing, and the polite in society now seldom visited

Digitized by Google

her; and from being once the object of every eye, she was now deserted by all, and preyed upon by the bitter reflections of her own imprudence.

Mr. Wood and part of his family were gone to London, and Miss Sylvia was left with the rest as governess at Bath. She sometimes saw Mr. Nash, and acknowledged the friendship of his admonitions, though she refused to accept any other marks of his generosity than that of advice. Upon the close of the day on which Mr. Wood was expected to return from London, she expressed some uneasiness at the disappointment of not seeing him, took particular care to settle the affairs of his family, and then as usual sat down to meditation. She now cast a retrospect over her past misconduct, and her approaching misery; she saw that even affluence gave her no real happiness, and from indigence she thought nothing could be hoped but lingering calamity. She at length conceived the fatal resolution of leaving a life in which she could see no corner for comfort, and terminating a scene of imprudence in suicide.

Thus resolved, she sat down at her dining-room window, and with cool intrepidity wrote the following lines on one of the panes of the window:

> "O Death! thou pleasing end of human woe!
> Thou cure for life! thou greatest good below!
> Still may'st thou fly the coward and the slave,
> And thy soft slumbers only bless the brave."

She then went into company with the most cheerful serenity, talked of indifferent subjects till supper, which she ordered to be got ready in a little library belonging to the family. There she spent the remaining hours preceding bed-time, in dandling two of Mr. Wood's children on her knees. In retiring from thence to her chamber, she went into the nursery to take her leave of

Digitized by Google

another child, as it lay sleeping in the cradle. Struck with the innocence of the little babe's looks, and the consciousness of her meditated guilt, she could not avoid bursting into tears and hugging it in her arms; she then bid her old servant a good night, for the first time she had ever done so, and went to bed as usual.

It is probable she soon quitted her bed, and was seized with an alternation of passions, before she yielded to the impulse of despair. She dressed herself in clean linen and white garments of every kind, like a bridemaid. Her gown was pinned over her breast, just as a nurse pins the swaddling clothes of an infant. A pink silk girdle was the instrument with which she resolved to terminate her misery, and this was lengthened by another made of gold thread. The end of the former was tied with a noose, and the latter with three knots, at a small distance from one another.

Thus prepared, she sat down again and read; for she left the book open at that place, in the story of Olympia, in the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto, where, by the perfidy and ingratitude of her bosom friend, she was ruined and left to the mercy of an unpitying world. This fatal event gave her fresh spirits to go through her tragical purpose; so, standing upon a stool, and flinging the girdle, which was tied round her neck, over a closet door that opened into her chamber, she remained suspended. Her weight, however, broke the girdle, and the poor despairer fell on the floor with such violence, that her fall awakened a workman that lay in the house, about half an hour after two o'clock. Recovering herself, she began to walk about the room, as her usual custom was when she wanted sleep; and the workman imagining it to be only some ordinary accident, again went to sleep. She once more, therefore, had recourse to a stronger girdle made of silver thread, and this kept her sus-

Digitized by Google

pended until she died. Her old maid continued in the morning to wait as usual for the ringing of the bell, and protracted her patience, hour after hour, till two o'clock in the afternoon; when the workmen at length entering the room through the window, found their unfortunate mistress still hanging and quite cold. The coroner's jury being empanelled, brought in their verdict lunacy, and her corpse was next night decently buried in her father's grave.*

Thus ended a female wit, a toast, and a gamester; loved, admired, and forsaken: formed for the delight of society, fallen by imprudence into an object of pity. Hundreds in high life lamented her fate, and wished, when too late, to redress her injuries. They who once had helped to impair her fortune, now regretted that they had assisted in so mean a pursuit. The little effects she had left behind were bought up with the greatest avidity, by those who desired to preserve some token of a companion, that once had given them such delight. The remembrance of every virtue she was possessed of was now improved by pity. Her former follies were few, but the last swelled them to a large amount: and she remains the strongest instance to posterity, that want of prudence alone almost cancels every other virtue.

In all this unfortunate lady's affairs Nash took a peculiar concern; he directed her when they played, advised her when she deviated from the rules of caution, and performed the last offices of friendship after her decease, by raising the auction of her little effects.

But he was not only the assistant and the friend of the fair

* [She was buried in the Abbey Church, on the 9th of September, 1731, in the grave of her honest, brave old father, General Braddock, a gentleman who had experienced some undeserved hardships in life, but who may be said to be thus far happy, that he lived not to see or hear of the tragical catastrophe of his beloved daughter." Gent. Mag. vol. i. p. 397.]

Digitized by Google

sex; he was also their defender. He secured their persons from insult, and their reputations from scandal. Nothing offended him more than a young fellow's pretending to receive favors from ladies he probably never saw. Nothing pleased him so much as seeing such a piece of deliberate mischief punished. Nash and one of his friends, being newly arrived at Tunbridge from Bath, were one day on the walks, and seeing a young fellow of fortune with whom they had some slight acquaintance, joined him. After the usual chat and news of the day was over, Nash asked him, how long he had been at the Wells, and what company was there? The other replied, he had been at Tunbridge a month; but as for company, he could find as good at a Tyburn ball. Not a soul was to be seen, except a parcel of gamesters and strumpets, who would grant the last favor for a single stake at the Pharaoh bank. "Look you there," continued he, "that goddess of midnight, so fine at t'other end of the walks, by Jove she was mine this morning; and she there, who brings up the rear with powdered hair and dirty ruffles, she's pretty enough but cheap, perfectly cheap: why, my boys—last Wednesday night we were happy." "Hold there, sir," cried the gentleman; "as for your having the first lady, it is possible it may be true, and I intend to ask her about it, for she is my sister; but as to your being happy with the other last Wednesday, I am sure you are a lying rascal. She is my wife, and we came here but last night." The buck vainly asked pardon; the gentleman was going to give him proper chastisement, when Nash interposed in his behalf, and obtained his pardon upon condition that he quitted Tunbridge immediately.

But Nash not only took care, during his administration, to protect the ladies from the insults of our sex, but to guard them from the slanders of each other. He, in the first place, prevented any animosities that might arise from place and precedence, by being previously acquainted with the rank and quality

Digitized by Google

of almost every family in the British dominions. He endeavored to render scandal odious, by marking it as the result of envy and folly united. Not even Solon could have enacted a wiser law in such a society as Bath. The gay, the heedless, and the idle, who mostly compose the group of water-drinkers, seldom are at the pains of talking upon universal topics which require comprehensive thought or abstract reasoning. The adventures of the little circle of their own acquaintance or of some names of quality and fashion make up their whole conversation. But it is too likely, that when we mention those, we wish to depress them, in order to render ourselves more conspicuous; scandal must therefore have fixed her throne at Bath in preference to any other part of the kingdom. However, though these endeavors could not totally suppress this custom among the fair, yet they gained him the friendship of several ladies of distinction who had smarted pretty severely under the lash of censure.

Among this number was the old Duchess of Marlborough, who conceived a particular friendship for him, and which continued during her life. She frequently consulted him in several concerns of a private nature. Her letting leases, building bridges, or forming canals, were often carried on under his guidance; but she advised with him particularly in purchasing liveries for the footmen; a business to which she thought his genius best adapted. As any thing relative to her may please the curiosity of such as delight in the anecdotes and letters of the great, however dull and insipid, I shall beg leave to present them with one or two of her epistles, collected at a venture from several others to the same purpose.

"To Mr. NASH, at the Bath.

"Blenheim, Sept. 18, 1724.

"Mr. Jennens will give you an account how little time I have in my power, and that will make my excuse for not thanking you sooner for the

Digitized by Google

favor of your letter, and for the trouble you have given yourself in bespeaking the cloth, which I am sure will be good, since you have undertaken to order it. Pray ask Mrs. Jennens concerning the cascade, which will satisfy all doubts in that matter; she saw it play, which it will do in great beauty, for at least six hours together, and it runs enough to cover all the stones constantly, and is a hundred feet broad, which I am told is a much greater breadth than any cascade is in England; and this will be yet better than it is, when it is quite finished; this water is a great addition to this place, and the lake being thirty acres, out of which the cascade comes, and falls into the canal that goes through the bridge, it makes that look as if it was necessary, which before seemed so otherwise. I am your most humble servant,

"S. MARLBOROUGH."

"To Mr. NASH, at the Bath.

"Marlborough-house, May 17, 1735.

"SIR:—I have received the favor of yours of the 10th of May, with that from Mr. Harvey; and by last post I received a letter from Mr. Overton, a sort of a bailiff and a surveyor, whom I have employed a great while upon the estates in Wiltshire. He is a very active and very useful man of his sort. He writes to me, that Mr. Harvey has been with him, and brought him a paper, which I sent you. He says, that finding he was a man that was desirous to serve me, he had assisted him all he could, by informations which he has given; and that he should continue to assist him. I have writ to him that he did mighty well. There is likewise a considerable tenant of my lord Bruce's, his name is Cannons, who has promised me his assistance towards recommending tenants for these farms. And if Mr. Harvey happens to know such a man, he may put him in mind of it. I am sure you will do me all the good you can. And I hope you are sure that I shall always be sensible of the obligations I have to you, and ever be your most thankful and obliged humble servant,

"S. MARLBOROUGH.

"Mr. Harvey may conclude to take any prices that were given you in the paper. But as I know that we have been scandalously cheated, if he finds that any thing can be let better than it has been let, I do not doubt but he will do it."

The Duchess of Marlborough seems to have been not a much better writer than Nash; but she was worth many hundred thousand pounds, and that might console her. It may give splenetic philosophy, however, some scope for meditation, when

Digitized by Google

it considers what a parcel of stupid trifles the world is ready to admire.

Whatever might have been Nash's other excellences, there was one in which few exceeded him; I mean his extensive humanity. None felt pity more strongly, and none made greater efforts to relieve distress. If I were to name any reigning and fashionable virtue in the present age, I think it should be charity. The numberless benefactions privately given, the various public solicitations for charity, and the success they meet with, serve to prove, that though we may fall short of our ancestors in other respects, yet in this instance we greatly excel them. I know not whether it may not be spreading the influence of Nash too widely to say, that he was one of the principal causes of introducing this noble emulation among the rich; but certain it is no private man ever relieved the distresses of so many as he.

Before gaming was suppressed, and in the meridian of his life and fortune, his benefactions were generally found to equal his other expenses. The money he got without pain he gave away without reluctance; and whenever unable to relieve a wretch who sued for assistance, he has been often seen to shed tears. A gentleman of broken fortune, one day standing behind his chair, as he was playing a game of picquet for two hundred pounds, and observing with what indifference he won the money, could not avoid whispering these words to another who stood by; "Heavens! how happy would all that money make me!" Nash, overhearing him, clapped the money into his hand; and cried, "Go and be happy."

About six and thirty years ago, a clergyman brought his family to Bath for the benefit of the waters. His wife labored under a lingering disorder, which it was thought nothing but the Hot-wells could remove. The expenses of living there soon

Digitized by Google

lessened the poor man's finances; his clothes were sold, piece by piece, to provide a temporary relief for his little family, and his appearance was at last so shabby, that, from the number of holes in his coat and stockings, Nash gave him the name of Doctor Cullender. Our beau, it seems, was rude enough to make a jest of poverty, though he had sensibility enough to relieve it. The poor clergyman combated his distresses with fortitude; and, instead of attempting to solicit relief, endeavored to conceal them. Upon a living of thirty pounds a year he endeavored to maintain his wife and six children; but all his resources at last failed him, and nothing but famine was seen in the wretched family. The poor man's circumstances were at last communicated to Nash; who, with his usual cheerfulness, undertook to relieve him. On a Sunday evening, at a public tea-drinking at Harrison's, he went about to collect a subscription, and began it himself by giving five guineas. By this means two hundred guineas were collected in less than two hours, and the poor family raised from the lowest despondence into affluence and felicity. A bounty so unexpected, had a better influence even upon the woman's constitution than all that either the physicians or the waters of Bath could produce, and she recovered. But his good offices did not rest here. He prevailed upon a nobleman of his acquaintance to present the doctor with a living of £160 a year, which made that happiness he had before produced, in some measure permanent.

In the severe winter of the year 1739 his charity was great, useful, and extensive. He frequently, at that season of calamity, entered the houses of the poor, whom he thought too proud to beg, and generously relieved them. The colliers were at this time peculiarly distressed; and in order to excite compassion, a number of them yoked themselves to a wagon loaded with coals, and drew it into Bath, and presented it to Nash. Their scheme had the proper effect. Nash procured them a subscription, and

Digitized by Google

gave ten guineas towards it himself. The weavers also shared his bounty at that season. They came begging in a body into Bath, and he provided a plentiful dinner for their entertainment, and gave each a week's subsistence at going away.

There are few public charities to which he was not a subscriber, and many he principally contributed to support. Among others, Mr. Annesley, that strange example of the mutability of fortune, and the inefficacy of our laws, shared his interest and bounty. I have now before me a well-written letter, addressed to Nash, in order to obtain his interest for that unhappy gentleman: it comes from Mr. Henderson, a quaker, who was Mr. Annesley's father's agent. This gentleman warmly espoused the young adventurer's interest, and, I am told, fell with him.

"London, October 23, 1756.

"My Good Friend:—When I had the honor of conversing with thee at Tunbridge, in September last, concerning that most singular striking case of Mr. Annesley, whom I have known since he was about six years old, I being then employed by the late Lord Baron of Altham, his father, as his agent. From what I know of the affairs of that family, I am well assured, that Mr. Annesley is the legitimate son of the late Lord Baron of Altham, and in consequence thereof, is entitled to the honors and estates of Anglesey. Were I not well assured of his right to those honors and estates, I would not give countenance to his claim. I well remember, that thou then madest me a promise to assist him in soliciting a subscription, that was then begun at Tunbridge; but as that place was not within the limits of thy province, thou couldst not promise to do much there. But thou saidst, that in case he would go to Bath in the season, thou wouldst then and there show how much thou wouldst be his friend.

"And now, my good friend, as the season is come on, and Mr. Annesley now at Bath, I beg leave to remind thee of that promise; and that thou wilt keep in full view the honor, the everlasting honor, that will naturally redound to thee from thy benevolence, and crown all the good actions of thy life. I say, now in the vale of life, to relieve a distressed young nobleman, to extricate so immense an estate from the hands of oppression; to do this, will fix such a ray of glory on thy memory, as will speak forth thy praise to future ages. This, with great respect, is the needful, from thy assured Friend,

"William Henderson."

"Be pleased to give my respects to Mr. Annesley and his spouse."

Digitized by Google

Nash punctually kept his word with this gentleman. He began the subscription himself with the utmost liberality, and procured such a list of encouragers, as at once did honor to Mr. Annesley's cause, and their own generosity. What a pity it was that this money, which was given for the relief of indigence only, went to feed a set of reptiles, who batten upon our weakness, miseries, and vice!

It may not be known to the generality of my readers, that the last act of the comedy, called "Esop," which was added to the French plot of Boursault, by Mr. Vanbrugh, was taken from a story told of Nash upon a similar occasion. He had in the early part of life made proposals of marriage to Miss V——, of D——: his affluence at that time, and the favor which he was in with the nobility, readily induced the young lady's father to favor his addresses. However, upon opening the affair to herself, she candidly told him her affections were placed upon another, and that she could not possibly comply. Though this answer satisfied Nash, it was by no means sufficient to appease the father; and he peremptorily insisted upon her obedience. Things were carried to the last extremity, when Nash undertook to settle the affair; and desiring his favored rival to be sent for, with his own hand presented his mistress to him, together with a fortune equal to what her father intended to give her. Such an uncommon instance of generosity had an instant effect upon the severe parent; he considered such disinterestedness as a just reproach to his own mercenary disposition, and took his daughter once more into favor. I wish, for the dignity of history, that the sequel could be concealed; but the young lady ran away with her footman, before half a year was expired, and her husband died of grief.

In general, the benefactions of a generous man are but ill bestowed. His heart seldom gives him leave to examine the real

Digitized by Google

distress of the object that sues for pity; his good-nature takes the alarm too soon, and he bestows his fortune on only apparent wretchedness. The man naturally frugal, on the other hand, seldom relieves; but when he does, his reason, and not his sensations, generally find out the object. Every instance of his bounty is therefore permanent, and bears witness to his benevolence.

Of all the immense sums which Nash lavished upon real or apparent wretchedness, the effects, after a few years, seemed to disappear. His money was generally given to support immediate want, or to relieve improvident indolence, and therefore it vanished in an hour. Perhaps towards the close of life, were he to look round on the thousands he had relieved, he would find but few made happy, or fixed by his bounty in a state of thriving industry: it was enough for him, that he gave to those that wanted; he never reflected that charity to some might impoverish himself without relieving them; he seldom considered the merit or the industry of the petitioner; or he rather fancied, that misery was an excuse for indolence and guilt. It was a usual saying of his, when he went to beg for any person in distress, that they who could stoop to the meanness of solicitation must certainly want the favor for which they petitioned.

In this manner, therefore, he gave away immense sums of his own, and still greater which he procured from others. His way was, when any person was proposed to him as an object of charity, to go round with his hat first among the nobility, according to their rank, and so on, till he left scarce a single person unsolicited. They who go thus about to beg for others, generally find a pleasure in the task. They consider, in some measure, every benefaction they procure, as given by themselves, and have at once the pleasure of being liberal, without the self-reproach of being profuse.

But of all the instances of Nash's bounty, none does him

Digitized by Google

more real honor than the pains he took in establishing a hospital at Bath, in which benefaction, however, Dr. Oliver had a great share. This was one of those well guided charities, dictated by reason, and supported by prudence. By this institution the diseased poor might recover health, when incapable of receiving it in any other part of the kingdom. As the disorders of the poor who could expect to find relief at Bath, were mostly chronical, the expense of maintaining them there was found more than their parishes thought proper to afford. They therefore chose to support them in a continual state of infirmity, by a small allowance at home, rather than be at the charge of an expensive cure. A hospital therefore at Bath, it was thought, would be an asylum to those disabled creatures, and would, at the same time, give the physician a more thorough insight into the efficacy of the waters, from the regularity with which such patients would be obliged to take them. These inducements, therefore, influenced Dr. Oliver and Nash to promote a subscription towards such a benefaction. The design was set on foot so early as the year 1711, but was not completed till the year 1742. This delay, which seems surprising, was in fact owing to the want of a proper fund for carrying the work into execution. What I said above, of charity being the characteristic virtue of the present age, will be more fully evinced by comparing the old and new subscriptions for this hospital. These will show the difference between ancient and modern benevolence. When I run my eye over the list of those who subscribed in the year 1723, I find the subscription in general seldom rose above a guinea each person; so that, at that time, with all their efforts, they were unable to raise four hundred pounds; but in about twenty years after, each particular subscription was greatly increased—ten, twenty, thirty pounds, being the most ordinary sums then subscribed, and they soon raised above two thousand pounds for the purpose.

Digitized by Google

Thus, chiefly by the means of Dr. Oliver and Nash, but not without the assistance of the good Mr. Allen,* who gave them the stone for building and other benefactions, this hospital was erected; and it is at present fitted up for the reception of one hundred and ten patients, the cases mostly paralytic or leprous.

I am unwilling to leave this subject of his benevolence, because it is a virtue in his character which must stand almost single against a hundred follies; and it deserves the more to be insisted on, because it was large enough to outweigh them all. A man may be a hypocrite safely in every other instance but in charity: there are few who will buy the character of benevolence at the rate for which it must be acquired. In short, the sums he gave away were immense; and in old age, when at last grown too poor to give relief, *he gave*, as the poet has it, "*all he had—a tear:*" when incapable of relieving the agonies of the wretched, he attempted to relieve his own by a flood of sorrow.

From the hospital erected for the benefit of the poor, it is an easy transition to the monuments erected by him in honor of the great. Upon the recovery of the Prince of Orange, by drinking the Bath waters, Nash caused a small obelisk, thirty feet high, to be erected in a grove near the Abbey church, since called Orange Grove. This Prince's arms adorn the west side of the body of the pedestal. The inscription is on the opposite side, in the following words:—

, memoriam sanitatis Principi Auriaco Aquarum thermalium potu. , avente Deo, ovante Britannia, feliciter restitutæ, M.DCC.XXXIV." In English thus:—In memory of the happy restoration of the health of the Prince of

* [The friend of Pope and Warburton, and one of Fielding's benefactors, but unnamed, by his own desire: thus confirming the truth of Pope's couplet—

"Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

He died in 1764.]

Digitized by Google

Orange, through the favor of God, and to the great joy of Britain, by drinking the Bath waters. 1734."

I find it a general custom at all baths and spas, to erect monuments of this kind to the memory of every prince who has received benefit from the waters. Aix, Spa, and Pisa abound with inscriptions of this nature, apparently doing honor to the prince, but in reality celebrating the efficacy of their springs. It is wrong, therefore, to call such monuments instances of gratitude, though they may wear that appearance.

In the year 1738, the Prince of Wales came to Bath, who presented Nash with a large gold enamelled snuff-box; and upon his departure, Nash, as king of Bath, erected an obelisk in honor of this prince, as he had before done for the Prince of Orange. This handsome memorial in honor of that good-natured prince is erected in Queen-square. It is inclosed with a stone balustrade, and in the middle of every side there are large iron gates. In the centre is the obelisk, seventy feet high, and terminating in a point. The expenses of this were eighty pounds; and Nash was determined that the inscription should answer the magnificence of the pile. With this view he wrote to Mr. Pope, requesting an inscription. I should have been glad to have given Nash's letter upon this occasion; the reader, however, must be satisfied with Pope's reply, which is as follows:

"Sir:—I have received yours, and thank your partiality in my favor. You say words cannot express the gratitude you feel for the favor of his royal highness, and yet you would have me express what you feel, and in a few words. I own myself unequal to the task; for even granting it possible to express an inexpressible idea, I am the worst person you could have pitched upon for this purpose, who have received so few favors from the great myself, that I am utterly unacquainted with what kind of thanks they like best. Whether the prince most loves poetry or prose, I protest I do not know; but this I dare

Digitized by Google

venture to affirm, that you can give him as much satisfaction in either as I can. I am sir, your affectionate servant,

"A. POPE."

What Nash's answer to this billet was I cannot take upon me to ascertain; but it was probably a perseverance in his former request. The following is the copy of Mr. Pope's reply to his second letter:

"SIR:—I had sooner answered yours, but in the hope of procuring a properer hand than mine; and then in consulting with some whose office about the prince might make them the best judges what sort of inscription to set up. Nothing can be plainer than the inclosed; it is nearly the common sense of the thing, and I do not know how to flourish upon it: but this you would do as well, or better yourself, and I dare say may mend the expression. I am truly, dear sir, your affectionate servant,

"A. POPE."

"I think I need not tell you my name should not be mentioned."

Such a letter as this was what might naturally be expected from Mr. Pope. Notwithstanding the seeming modesty towards the conclusion, the vanity of an applauded writer bursts through every line of it. The difficulty of concealing his hand from the clerks at the post-office, and the solicitude to have his name concealed, were marks of the consciousness of his own importance. It is probable his hand was not so very well known, or his letters so eagerly opened, by the clerks of the office, as he seems always to think; but in all his letters, as well as in those of Swift, there runs a strain of pride, as if the world talked of nothing but themselves. "Alas," says he, in one of them, "the day after I am dead, the sun will shine as bright as the day before, and the world will be as merry as usual!" Very strange, that neither an eclipse nor an earthquake should follow the loss of a poet!

Digitized by Google

The inscription referred to in this letter was the same which was afterwards engraved on the obelisk, and is as follows:—

"In memory of honors bestowed, and in gratitude for benefits conferred in this city, by his Royal Highness Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his royal consort, in the year 1738, this obelisk is erected by Richard Nash, Esq."

I dare venture to say, there was scarce a common councilman in the corporation of Bath but could have done this as well. Nothing can be more frigid, though the subject was worthy of the utmost exertions of genius.

About this period every season brought some new accession of honor to Nash; and the corporation now universally found that he was absolutely necessary for promoting the welfare of the city; so that this year seems to have been the meridian of his glory. About this time he arrived at such a pitch of authority, that I really believe Alexander was not greater at Persepolis. The countenance he received from the Prince of Orange, the favor he was in with the Prince of Wales, and the caresses of the nobility, all conspired to lift him to the utmost pitch of vanity. The exultation of a little mind, upon being admitted to the familiarity of the great, is inexpressible. The Prince of Orange had made him a present of a very fine snuff-box. Upon this some of the nobility thought it would be proper to give snuff-boxes, too; they were quickly imitated by the middling gentry, and it soon became the fashion to give Nash snuff-boxes.

To add to his honors the corporation of Bath placed a full-length statue of him in Wiltshire's ball-room, between the busts of Newton and Pope. It was upon this occasion that the Earl of Chesterfield wrote that severe but witty epigram, the last lines of which were so deservedly admired, and ran thus:

"The statue plac'd the busts between,
Adds to the satire strength;

Digitized by Google

Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
But Folly at full length."*

* [There are two versions of this celebrated epigram. The first appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1741—

"Immortal NEWTON never spoke
More truth, than here you'll find,
Nor POPE himself e'er penn'd a joke
More cruel on mankind.

"The picture plac'd the busts between
Gives satire all her strength;
Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
But Folly at full length."

The second is as follows:

"The old Egyptians hid their wit
In hieroglyphic dress,
To give men pains in search of it,
And please themselves with guess.

"Moderns, to hit the self-same path,
And exercise their parts,
Place figures in a room at Bath—
Forgive them, God of Arts!

"Newton, if I can judge aright,
All Wisdom does express;
His knowledge gives mankind delight,
Adds to their happiness.

"Pope is the emblem of true Wit,
The sunshine of the mind;
Read o'er his works in search of it,
You'll endless pleasure find.

"Nash represents man in the mass,
Made up of wrong and right;
Sometimes a knave, sometimes an ass,
Now blunt, and now polite.

"The picture plac'd the busts between,
Adds to the thought much strength;
Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
But Folly at full length."

Campbell's British Poets, vol. vi. p. 280.]

Digitized by Google

The example of the corporation was followed by all his acquaintance of inferior rank. He was treated in every respect like a great man; he had his levee, his flatterers, his buffoons, his good natured creatures, and even his dedicators. A trifling, ill-supported vanity was his foible; and while he received the homage of the vulgar, and enjoyed the familiarity of the great, he felt no pain for the unpromising view of poverty that lay before him: he enjoyed the world as it went, and drew upon content for the deficiencies of fortune. If a cringing wretch called him, "his Honor," he was pleased; internally conscious that he had the justest pretensions to the title. If a beggar called him "My Lord," he was happy, and generally sent the flatterer off happy, too. I have known him, in London, wait a whole day at a window in the Smyrna Coffee-house, in order to receive a bow from the Prince, or the Duchess of Marlborough, as they passed by where he was standing, and he would then look round upon the company for admiration and respect.

But perhaps the reader desires to know who could be low enough to flatter a man who himself lived in some measure by dependence. Hundreds are ready upon those occasions. The very needy are almost ever flatterers. A man in wretched circumstances forgets his own value, and feels no pain in giving up superiority to every claimant. The very vain are ever flatterers; as they find it necessary to make use of all their arts to keep company with such as are superior to themselves. But particularly the prodigal are prone to adulation, in order to open new supplies for their extravagance. The poor, the vain, and the extravagant are chiefly addicted to this vice; and such hung upon his good-nature. When these three characters are found united in one person, the composition generally becomes a great man's favorite. It was not difficult to collect such a group in a city that was the centre of pleasure. Nash had them of all

Digitized by Google

sizes, from the half-pay captain in laced clothes, to the humble boot-catcher at the Bear.

I have before me a bundle of letters, all addressed from a pack of flattering reptiles, to "his Honor," and even some printed dedications in the same servile strain. In these "his Honor" is complimented as the great encourager of the polite arts, as a gentleman of the most accomplished taste, of the most extensive learning, and, in short, of every thing in the world. But, perhaps, it will be thought wrong in me to unveil the blushing muse, to brand learning with the meanness of its professors, or to expose scholars in a state of contempt. For the honor of letters, the dedications to Nash are not written by scholars or poets, but by people of a different stamp.

Among this number was the highwayman, who was taken after attempting to rob and murder Dr. Handcock. He was called Poulter, *alias* Baxter, and published a book exposing the tricks of gamblers, thieves, and pickpockets. This he intended to have dedicated to Nash; but the generous patron, though no man loved praise more, was too modest to have it printed. However, he took care to preserve the manuscript among the rest of his papers. The book was entitled, "The Discoveries of John Poulter, *alias* Baxter, who was apprehended for robbing Dr. Handcock of Salisbury, on Clarken Down, near Bath; and who has been admitted king's evidence, and discovered a most numerous gang of villains. Being a full account of all the robberies he committed, and the surprising tricks and frauds he has practised for the space of five years last past, in different parts of England, particularly in the west. Written wholly Himself."* The dedication intended to be prefixed is as follows, and will give a specimen of the style of a highwayman and a gambler:

* [This book appeared in 1761, in 8vo.]

Digitized by Google

"To the Honorable RICHARD NASH, Esq.

"May it please your Honor—With humblest submission I make bold to present the following sheets to your Honor's consideration and well-known humanity. As I am industriously careful, in respect to his Majesty and good subjects, to put an end to the unfortunate misconducts of all I know, by bringing them to the gallows. To be sure some may censure, as if from self-preservation I made this ample discovery; but I communicate this to your Honor and gentry, whether the life of one person being taken away, would answer the end, as to let escape such a number of villains, who has been the ruining of many a poor family, for whom my soul is now much concerned. If my inclinations were ever so roguish inclined, what is it to so great a number of villains, when they consult together. As your Honor's wisdom, humanity and interest are the friend of the virtuous, I make bold to lay at your Honor's feet the following lines, which will put every honest man upon his defence against the snares of the mischievous; and am, with greatest gratitude, honored sir, your Honor's most truly devoted and obedient servant,

"Taunton Jail, June 2d. JOHN POULTER, *alias* BAXTER."

Flattery from such a wretch as this one would think but little pleasing; however, certain it is that Nash was pleased with it. He loved to be called "your Honor," and "Honorable," and the highwayman more than once experienced his generosity. By this fellow's discoveries, Nash was enabled to serve many of the nobility and gentry of his acquaintance: he received a list of all those houses of ill fame which harbored or assisted rogues, and took care to furnish travellers with proper precautions to avoid them. It was odd enough to see a gamester thus employed in detecting the frauds of gamblers.

Among the Dedications there is one from a Professor of Cookery, which is even more adulatory than the preceding. It is prefixed to a work, entitled, "The Complete Preserver; or a new method of preserving fruits, flowers, and other vegetables, either with or without sugar, vinegar, or spirits," &c

Digitized by Google

"To the very Honorable Richard Nash, Esq.

"Honored Sir:—As much as the oak exceeds the bramble, so much do you exceed the rest of mankind in benevolence, charity, and every other virtue that adorns, ennobles, and refines the human species. I have, therefore, made bold to prefix your name, though without permission, to the following work, which stands in need of such a patron, to excuse its errors, with a candor only known to such a heart as your own. The obligations I have received at your hands, it is impossible for me ever to repay, except by my endeavors, as in the present case, to make known the many excellent virtues which you possess. But what can my wit do to recommend such a genius as yours: a single word, a smile from yourself, outweighs all that I, or perhaps the best of our poets could express in writing, in the compass of a year. It would ill become my sex to declare what power you have over us; but your generosity is, even in this instance, greater than your desire to oblige. The following sheets were drawn up at my hours of leisure, and may be serviceable to such of my sex as are more willing to employ their time in laudable occupations and domestic economy, than in dress and dissipation. What reception they may receive from your Honor, I am incapable of telling; however, from your known candor and humanity, I expect the most favorable. I am, honored sir, your most obedient and obliged humble servant,

H. W."

A musician in his dedication still exceeds the other two in adulation. However, though the matter may be some impeachment on his sincerity, the manner in which it is written reflects no disgrace upon his understanding.

"To Richard Nash, Esq.

Sir:—The kind partiality of my friends prevailed with me to present to the world these my first attempts in musical composition; and the generous protection you have been pleased to afford me, makes it my indispensable duty to lay them at your feet. Indeed, to whom could I presume to offer them, but to the great encourager of all polite arts; for your generosity knows no bounds; nor are you more famed for that dignity of mind, which ennobles and gives a grace to every part of your conduct, than for that humanity and beneficence which makes you the friend and benefactor of all mankind. To you the poor

Digitized by Google

and the rich, the diseased and the healthy, the aged and the young, owe every comfort, every conveniency, and every innocent amusement, that the best heart, the most skilful management, and the most accomplished taste can furnish. Even this age, so deeply practised in all the subtleties of refined pleasure, gives you this testimony: even this age, so ardently engaged in all the ways of the most unbounded charity, gives you this praise. Pardon me then, if, amidst the crowd of votaries, I make my humble offering, if I seize this first opportunity of publicly expressing the grateful sentiments of my own heart and profound respect, with which I am, sir, your most obliged, most devoted, and most obedient servant, J. G."

I fancy I have almost fatigued the reader with the efforts of these elegant panegyrists; however, I cannot finish this run of quotation, without giving a specimen of poetry, addressed to him upon a certain occasion; and all I shall say in its defence is, that those who are pleased with the prose dedications will not dislike the present attempt in poetry.

"To Richard Nash, Esq, on his Sickness at Tunbridge.

"Say, must the friend of human kind,
Of most refin'd—of most diffusive mind;
Must Nash himself beneath these ailments grieve?
He felt for all—he felt—but to relieve,
To heal the sick—the wounded to restore,
And bid desponding nature mourn no more.
Thy quickning warmth, O let thy patron feel,
Improve thy springs with double power to heal:
Quick, hither, all-inspiring Health, repair,
And save the gay—and wretched from despair;
Thou only Esra's drooping sons can'st cheer,
And stop the soft-ey'd virgin's trickling tear;
In murmurs who their Monarch's pains deplore;
While sickness faints, and pleasure is no more;
O let not Death, with hasty strides advance,
Thou, mildest Charity, avert the lance;

Digitized by Google

His threatening power, celestial maid! defeat;
Nor take him with thee, to thy well known seat;
Leave him on earth some longer date behind,
To bless, to polish, and relieve mankind:
Come then kind Health! O quickly come away,
Bid Nash revive—and all the world be gay."

Such addresses as these were daily offered to our titular King. When in the meridian of power, scarce a morning passed that did not increase the number of his humble admirers, and enlarge the sphere of his vanity.

The man who is constantly served up with adulation, must be a first-rate philosopher if he can listen without contracting new affectations. The opinion we form of ourselves is generally measured by what we hear from others; and when they conspire to deceive, we too readily concur in the delusion. Among the number of much applauded men in the circle of our own friends, we can recollect but few that have heads quite strong enough to bear a loud acclamation of public praise in their favor; among the whole list we shall scarcely find one that has not thus been made, on some side of his character, a coxcomb.

When the best head turns and grows giddy with praise, is it to be wondered that poor Nash should be driven by it almost into a frenzy of affectation? Towards the close of life he became affected. He chiefly labored to be thought a sayer of good things; and by frequent attempts was now and then successful, for he ever lay upon the lurch.

There never perhaps was a more silly passion than this desire of having a man's jests recorded. For this purpose, it is necessary to keep ignorant or ill-bred company, who are only fond of repeating such stories; in the next place, a person must tell his own jokes, in order to make them more universal; but what is worst of all, scarcely a joke of this kind succeeds, but at the

Digitized by Google

expense of a man's good-nature; and he who exchanges the character of being thought agreeable for that of being thought witty, makes but a very bad bargain.

The success Nash sometimes met with led him on, when late in life, to mistake his true character. He was really agreeable, but he chose to be thought a wit: he therefore indulged his inclination, and never mattered how rude he was, provided he was thought comical. He thus got the applause he sought for; but too often found enemies, where he least expected to find them. Of all the jests recorded of him, I scarcely find one that is not marked with petulance: he said whatever came uppermost, and in the number of his remarks it might naturally be expected that some were worth repeating; he threw often, and sometimes had a lucky cast.

In a life of almost ninety years, spent in the very point of public view, it is not strange that five or six sprightly things of his have been collected, particularly as he took every opportunity of repeating them himself. His usual way, when he thought he had said any thing clever, was to strengthen it with an oath, and to make up its want of sentiment by asseveration and grimace. For many years he thus entertained the company at the coffee-house with old stories, in which he always made himself the principal character. Strangers liked this well enough; but they who were used to his conversation found it insupportable. One story brought on another, and each came in the same order that it had the day preceding. But this custom may be rather ascribed to the peculiarity of age, than a peculiarity of character. It seldom happens, that old men allure, at least by novelty: age that shrivels the body contracts the understanding; instead of exploring new regions, they rest satisfied in the old, and walk round the circle of their former discoveries. His manner of telling a story, however, was not displeasing; but few

Digitized by Google

of those he told are worth transcribing. Indeed, it is the manner which places the whole difference between the wit of the vulgar and of those who assume the name of the polite: one has in general as much good sense as the other; a story transcribed from the one will be as entertaining as that copied from the other; but in conversation, the manner will give charms even to stupidity. The following is the story which he most frequently told, and pretty much in these words. Suppose the company to be talking of a German war, or Elizabeth Canning, he would begin thus:—"I'll tell you something to that purpose, that I fancy will make you laugh. A covetous old parson, as rich as the devil, scraped a fresh acquaintance with me several years ago at Bath. I knew him when he and I were students at Oxford, where we both studied damnationly hard; but that's neither here nor there. Well; very well. I entertained him at my house in John's Court. (No, my house in John's Court was not built then); but I entertained him with all that the city could afford; the rooms, the music, and every thing in the world. Upon his leaving Bath, he pressed me very hard to return the visit, and desired me to let him have the pleasure of seeing me at his house in Devonshire. About six months after, I happened to be in that neighborhood, and was resolved to see my old friend, from whom I expected a very warm reception. Well: I knocks at his door, when an old queer creature of a maid came to the door, and denied him. I suspected, however, that he was at home; and going into the parlor, what should I see, but the parson's legs up the chimney, where he had thrust himself to avoid entertaining me. This was very well. My dear, says I to the maid, it is very cold, extreme cold indeed, and I am afraid I have got a touch of my ague; light me the fire, if you please. La! sir, says the maid, who was a modest creature to be sure, the chimney smokes monstrously; you could not bear the room

Digitized by Google

for three minutes together. By the greatest good luck there was a bundle of straw in the hearth, and I called for a candle. The candle came. Well! good woman, says I, since you won't light me a fire, I'll light one for myself; and in a moment the straw was all in a blaze. This quickly unkennelled the old fox; there he stood in an old rusty night-gown, blessing himself, and looking like—a—hem—egad."

He used to tell surprising stories of his activity when young. —"Here I stand, gentlemen, that could once leap forty-two feet upon level ground, at three standing jumps, backward or forward. One, two, three, dart like an arrow out of a bow. But I am old now. I remember I once leaped for three hundred guineas with Count Klopstock, the great leaper, leaping-master to the Prince of Passau; you must all have heard of him. First he began with the running jump, and a most damnable bounce it was, that's certain: every body concluded that he had the match hollow; when only taking off my hat, stripping off neither coat, shoes, nor stockings, mind me, I fetches a run, and went beyond him one foot, three inches and three-quarters, measured, upon my soul, by Captain Pately's own standard!"

But in this torrent of insipidity, there sometimes were found very severe satire, strokes of true wit, and lines of humor, *cum fluerent lutulentus, &c.* He rallied very successfully; for he never felt another's joke, and drove home his own without pity. With his superiors he was familiar and blunt, the inferiority of his station secured him from their resentment; but the same bluntness which they laughed at, was by his equals regarded as insolence—something like a familiar boot-catcher at an inn; a gentleman would bear that joke from him, for which a brother boot-catcher would knock him down.

Among other stories of Nash's telling, I remember one, which I the more cheerfully repeat, as it tends to correct a piece of im-

Digitized by Google

pertinence that reigns in almost every country assembly. The principal inhabitants of a certain market-town at a distance from the capital, in order to encourage that harmony which ought to subsist in society, and to promote a mutual intercourse between the sexes, so desirable to both and so necessary for all, had established a monthly assembly in the town-hall, which was conducted with such decency, decorum, and politeness, that it drew the attention of the gentlemen and ladies in the neighborhood, and a nobleman and his family continually honored them with their presence. This naturally drew others, and in time the room was crowded with what the world calls good company; and the assembly prospered, till some of the newly-admitted ladies took it into their heads that the tradesmen's daughters were unworthy of their notice, and therefore refused to join hands with them in the dance. This was complained of by the town ladies, and that complaint was resented by the country gentlemen; who, more pert than wise, publicly advertised that they would not dance with tradesmen's daughters. This the most eminent tradesmen considered as an insult on themselves, and being men of worth, and able to live independently, they in return advertised that they would give no credit out of their town, and desired all others to discharge their accounts. A general uneasiness ensued; some writs were actually issued out, and much distress would have happened, had not my lord, who sided with no party, kindly interfered and composed the difference. The assembly, however, was ruined, and the families, I am told, are not friends yet, though this affair happened thirty years ago.

Nothing debases human nature so much as pride. This Nash knew, and endeavored to stifle every emotion of it at Bath. When he observed any ladies so extremely delicate and proud of a pedigree, as to only touch the back of an inferior's hand in the dance, he always called to order, and desired them to leave

Digitized by Google

the room or behave with common decency; and when any ladies and gentlemen drew off, after they had gone down a dance, without standing up till the dance was finished, he made up to them, and after asking whether they had done dancing, told them they should dance no more unless they stood up for the rest; and on these occasions he always was as good as his word.

Nash, though no great wit, had the art of sometimes saying rude things with decency, and rendering them pleasing by an uncommon turn. But most of the good things attributed to him, which have found their way into the jest-books, are no better than puns. The smartest things I have seen are against him. One day in the Grove he joined some ladies, and asking one of them who was crooked, whence she came? she replied, "Straight from London." "Confound me, madam," said he, "then you must have been damnably warped by the way."

She soon, however, had ample revenge. Sitting the following evening in one of the rooms, he once more joined her company, and with a sneer and bow asked her if she knew her catechism, and could tell the name of Tobit's dog? "His name, sir, was Nash," replied the lady, "and an impudent dog he was." This story is told in a celebrated romance;* I only repeat it here to have an opportunity of observing, that it actually happened.

Queen Anne once asked him, why he would not accept of knighthood? To which he replied, lest Sir William Read, the mountebank, who had been just knighted, should call him brother.

A house in Bath was said to be haunted by the devil, and a great noise was made about it, when Nash going to the minister of St. Michael's, entreated him to drive the devil out of Bath for ever, if it were only to oblige the ladies.

Nash used sometimes to visit the great Doctor Clarke. The

* [Roderick Random.]

Digitized by Google

doctor was one day conversing with Locke and two or three more of his learned and intimate companions, with that freedom, gayety, and cheerfulness, which is ever the result of innocence. In the midst of their mirth and laughter, the doctor, looking from the window, saw Nash's chariot stop at the door. "Boys, boys," cried the philosopher to his friends, "let us now be wise, for here is a fool coming."

Nash was one day complaining in the following manner to the Earl of Chesterfield, of his bad luck at play. "Would you think it, my lord, that damned bitch fortune, no later than last night, tricked me out of five hundred. Is it not surprising," continued he, "that my luck should never turn—that I should thus eternally be mauled?"—"I don't wonder at your losing money, Nash," said his lordship, "but all the world is surprised where you get it to lose."

Dr. Cheyne once, when Nash was ill, drew up a prescription for him, which was sent in accordingly. The next day the doctor coming to see his patient, found him up and well; upon which he asked if he had followed his prescription? "Followed your prescription?" cried Nash; "No. Egad, if I had, I should have broken my neck, for I flung it out of the two pair of stairs window."

It would have been well had he confined himself to such sallies; but as he grew old he grew insolent, and seemed, in some measure, insensible of the pain his attempts to be a wit gave others. Upon asking a lady to dance a minuet, if she refused he would often demand if she had got bandy legs. He would attempt to ridicule natural defects; he forgot the deference due to birth and quality, and mistook the manner of settling rank and precedence upon many occasions. He now seemed no longer fashionable among the present race of gentry; he grew peevish and fretful, and they who only saw the remnant of a man, severely

Digitized by Google

returned that laughter upon him which he had once lavished upon others.

Poor Nash was no longer the gay, thoughtless, idly industrious creature he once was; he now forgot how to supply new modes of entertainment, and became too rigid, to wind with ease through the vicissitudes of fashion. The evening of his life began to grow cloudy. His fortune was gone, and nothing but poverty lay in prospect. To embitter his hopes, he found himself abandoned by the great, whom he had long endeavored to serve; and was obliged to fly to those of humbler stations for protection, whom he once affected to despise. He now began to want that charity which he had never refused to any; and to find that a life of dissipation and gayety is ever terminated by misery and regret.

Poverty now denied him the indulgence not only of his favorite follies, but of his favorite virtues. The poor solicited him in vain; for he was himself a more pitiable object than they. The child of the public seldom has a friend, and he who once exercised his wit at the expense of others must naturally have enemies. Exasperated at last to the highest degree, an unaccountable whim struck him. Poor Nash was resolved to become an author; he who, in the vigor of manhood, was incapable of the task, now at the impotent age of eighty-six, was determined to write his own history! From the many specimens already given of his style, the reader will not much regret that the historian was interrupted in his design. Yet, as Montaigne observes, as the adventures of an infant, if an infant could inform us of them, would be pleasing, so the life of a beau, if a beau could write, would certainly serve to regale curiosity.

Whether he really intended to put this design in execution, or did it only to alarm the nobility, I will not take upon me to determine; but certain it is, that his friends went about collecting

Digitized by Google

subscriptions for the work, and he received several encouragements from such as were willing to be politely charitable. It was thought by many, that this history would reveal the intrigues of a whole age; that he had numberless secrets to disclose; but they never considered, that persons of public character like him, were the most unlikely in the world to be made partakers of those secrets which people desired the public should not know. In fact, he had few secrets to discover, and those he had are buried with him in the grave.

He was now past the power of giving or receiving pleasure, for he was poor, old, and peevish; yet still he was incapable of turning from his former manner of life to pursue happiness. The old man endeavored to practise the follies of the boy: he spurred on his jaded passions after every trifle of the day; tottering with age, he would be ever an unwelcome guest in the assemblies of the youthful and gay, and he seemed willing to find lost appetite among those scenes where he was once young.

An old man thus striving after pleasure is indeed an object of pity; but a man at once old and poor, running on in this pursuit, might excite astonishment. To see a being both by fortune and constitution rendered incapable of enjoyment, still haunting those pleasures he was no longer to share in; to see one of almost ninety settling the fashion of a lady's cap, or assigning her place in a country dance; to see him unmindful of his own reverend figure, or the respect he should have for himself, toasting demireps, or attempting to entertain the lewd and idle;—a sight like this might well serve as a satire on humanity; might show that man is the only preposterous creature alive who pursues the shadow of pleasure without temptation.

But he was not permitted to run on thus without severe and repeated reproof. The clergy sent him frequent calls to reformation; but the asperity of their advice in general abated its

Digitized by Google

intended effects; they threatened him with fire and brimstone, for what he had long been taught to consider as foibles, and not vices; so, like a desperate debtor, he did not care to settle an account, that, upon the first inspection, he found himself utterly unable to pay.

Such admonitions served to sting, without reforming him; they made him morose, but not pious. The dose was too strong for the patient to bear. He should have been met with smiles, and allured into reformation; if indeed he was criminal. But, in the name of piety, what was there criminal in his conduct? He had long been taught to consider his trifling profession as a very serious and important business. He went through his office with great gravity, solemnity, and care; why then denounce peculiar torments against a poor harmless creature, who did a thousand good things, and whose greatest vice was vanity? He deserved ridicule, indeed, and he found it; but scarce a single action of his life, except one, deserves the asperity of reproach.

Thus we see a variety of causes concurred to embitter his departing life. The weakness and infirmities of exhausted nature; the admonitions of the grave, who aggravated his follies into vices; the ingratitude of his dependents, who formerly flattered his fortunes; but particularly the contempt of the great, many of whom quite forgot him in his wants; all these hung upon his spirits and soured his temper, and the poor man of pleasure might have terminated his life very tragically, had not the corporation of Bath charitably resolved to grant him ten guineas the first Monday of every month. This bounty served to keep him from actual necessity, though far too trifling to enable him to support the character of a gentleman. Habit, and not nature, makes almost all our wants; and he who had been accustomed in the early parts of life to affluence and prodigality, when

Digitized by Google

reduced to a hundred and twenty-six pounds a year must pine in actual indigence.

In this variety of uneasiness his health began to fail. He had received from nature a robust and happy constitution, one indeed that was scarcely to be impaired by intemperance. He even pretended among his friends, that he never followed a single prescription in the whole course of his life. However, in this he was one day detected on the parade; for boasting there of his contempt and utter disuse of medicine, unluckily the effects of two blisters, which Dr. Oliver had prescribed, and which he then had upon each leg, unfortunately betrayed him. His aversion to physic, however, was frequently a topic of raillery between him and Dr. Cheyne, who was a man of some wit and breeding. When Cheyne recommended his vegetable diet, Nash would swear that his design was to send half the world grazing like Nebuchadnezzar. "Ay," Cheyne would reply, "Nebuchadnezzar was never such an infidel as thou art. It was but last week, gentlemen, that I attended this fellow in a fit of sickness; there I found him rolling up his eyes to heaven, and crying for mercy: he would then swallow my drugs like breast milk; yet you now hear him, how the old dog blasphemes the faculty." What Cheyne said in jest was true; he feared the approaches of death more than the generality of mankind, and was usually very devout while it threatened him. Though he was somewhat the libertine in words, none believed or trembled more than he did; for a mind neither schooled by philosophy nor encouraged by conscious innocence, is ever timid at the appearance of danger.

For some time before his decease nature gave warning of his approaching dissolution. The worn machine had run itself down to an utter impossibility of repair; he saw that he must die, and shuddered at the thought. His virtues were not of the great, but the amiable kind; so that fortitude was not among the

Digitized by Google

number. Anxious, timid, his thoughts still hanging on a receding world, he desired to enjoy a little longer that life, the miseries of which he had experienced so long. The poor unsuccessful gamester husbanded the wasting moments with an increased desire to continue the game, and to the last eagerly wished for one yet more happy throw. He died at his house in St. John's Court, Bath, on the 12th of February 1761, aged eighty-seven years, three months, and some days.*

His death was sincerely regretted by the city, to which he had been so long and so great a benefactor. The day after he died, the mayor called the corporation together, when they granted fifty pounds towards burying their sovereign with proper respect. After the corpse had lain four days, it was conveyed to the Abbey church in that city, with a solemnity somewhat peculiar to his character. About five the procession moved from his house; the charity-girls, two and two, preceded; next the boys of the charity-school, singing a solemn occasional hymn. Next marched the city music, and his own band, sounding at proper intervals a dirge. Three clergymen immediately preceded the coffin, which was adorned with sable plumes, and the pall supported by the six senior aldermen. The masters of the assembly-rooms followed as chief mourners; the beadles of that hospital which he had contributed so largely to endow, went next; and last of all the poor patients themselves, the lame, the emaciated, and the feeble, followed their old benefactor to his grave, shedding unfeigned tears, and lamenting themselves in him.

The crowd was so great, that not only the streets were filled, but, as one of the journals in a rant expresses it, "even the tops of the houses were covered with spectators. Each thought the

* This account of his age, which contradicts that given us by Dr. Oliver, was copied from Mr. Nash's own handwriting, by George Scott, Esq., from a book in the possession of Mr. Charles Morgan, at his coffee-house at Bath.

Digitized by Google

occasion affected themselves most; as when a real king dies, they asked each other, 'Where shall we find such another?' Sorrow sat upon every face, and even children lisped that their Sovereign was no more. The awfulness of the solemnity made the deepest impression on the minds of the distressed inhabitants. The peasant discontinued his toil, the ox rested from the plough; all nature seemed to sympathize with their loss, and the muffled bells rung a peal of bob-majors."

Our deepest solemnities have something truly ridiculous in them. There is somewhat ludicrous in the folly of historians, who thus declaim upon the death of kings and princes, as if there was any thing dismal, or any thing unusual, in it. "For my part," says Poggi, the Florentine, "I can no more grieve for another's death than I could for my own. I have ever regarded death as a very trifling affair, nor can black staves, long cloaks, or mourning coaches, in the least influence my spirits. Let us live here as long and as merrily as we can, and when we must die, why let us die merrily too, but die so as to be happy."

The few things Nash was possessed of were left to his relations. A small library of well-chosen books, some trinkets and pictures, were his only inheritance. Among the latter were a gold box, given by the late Countess of Burlington, with Lady Euston's picture in the lid, an agate *étui*, with a diamond on the top, by the Princess Dowager of Wales, and some other things of no great value. The rings, watches, and pictures, which he formerly received from others, would have come to a considerable amount; but these necessity had obliged him to dispose of. Some family pictures, however, remained, which were sold by advertisement, for five guineas each, after his decease.

It was natural to expect that the death of a person so long in the eye of the public must have produced a desire in several to delineate his character, or deplore his loss. He was scarcely

Digitized by Google

dead, when the public papers were filled with elegies, groans, and characters; and before he was buried there were epitaphs ready-made to inscribe on his stone. I remember one of those character writers, and a very gravé one, too, after observing, alas! that Richard Nash, Esq. was no more, went on to assure us, that he was "sagacious, *debonair*, and *comode*;" and concluded with gravely declaring, that "impotent posterity would in vain fumble to produce his fellow." Another, equally sorrowful, gave us to know, "that he was indeed a man;" an assertion which I fancy none will be so hardy as to contradict. But the merriest of all the lamentations made upon this occasion was that in which he was called "a constellation of the heavenly sphere."

One thing, however, is common almost with all of them; and that is, that Venus, Cupid, and the Graces are commanded to weep;* and that Bath shall never find such another. But though he was satirized with the praises of those, there were some of real abilities who undertook to do justice to his character, to praise him for his virtues, and acknowledge his faults. I need scarcely mention that Dr. Oliver and Dr. King are of this number. They had honored him with their friendship while living, and undertook to honor his memory when dead. The first published was that by Dr. Oliver,† written with much good sense, and still more good nature. But the reader will consider that he has assumed in his motto the character of a panegyrist, and spares his friend's faults, though he was too candid entirely to pass them over in silence:

* ["Alas! he is gone, and the city can tell
How in years and in glory lamented he fell:
Him mourn'd all the Dryads on Claverton's mount;
Him Avon deplor'd, him the nymph of the Fount."—ANSTEY.]

† [Dr. William Oliver died at Bath in 1764. His practice was extensive, and his conversation and literary talents were of an elevated cast. In 1751, he published "A Practical Treatise on the Use and Abuse of Warm Baths."]

Digitized by Google

A FAINT SKETCH OF THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND MANNERS OF THE LATE MR. NASH.*

Imperium in Imperio——
De mortuis nil nisi bonum.

Bath, February 13, 1761.

This morning died

RICHARD NASH, Esq.

Aged eighty-eight.

He was by birth a gentleman, an ancient Briton;
By education, a student of Jesus College in Oxford;—
By profession * * *
His natural genius was too volatile for any.
He tried the army and the law;
But soon found his mind superior to both—
He was born to govern,
Nor was his dominion like that of other legislators,
Over the servility of the vulgar,
But over the pride of the noble and the opulent.
His public character was great,
As it was self-built, and self-maintained;
His private amiable,
As it was grateful, beneficent, and generous.
By the force of genius
He erected the city of Bath into a province of pleasure,
And became, by universal consent,
Its legislator and ruler.
He plann'd, improv'd, and regulated all the amusements of the place;
His fundamental law was, that of good-breeding;
Hold sacred decency and decorum,
His constant maxim;
Nobody, howsoever exalted
By beauty, blood, titles or riches,
Could be guilty of a breach of it, unpunished—
The penalty, his disapprobation and public shame.
To maintain the sovereignty he had established,

* [Bath, printed for John Keene, in King's Mead-street, and sold by W. Kingston, on Trim Bridge.

Digitized by Google

He published Rules of Behavior,
Which from their propriety, acquired the force of laws;
And which the highest never infring'd, without immediately undergoing the public censure.
He kept the men in order; most wisely,
By prohibiting the wearing of swords in his dominions;
By which means
He prevented sudden passion from causing
The bitterness of unavailing repentance.
In all quarrels he was chosen Umpire—
And so just were his decisions,
That peace generally triumphed,
Crowned with the mutual thanks of both parties.
He kept the Ladies in good-humor; most effectually,
By a nice observance of the rules of place and precedence;
By ordaining scandal to be the infallible mark
Of a foolish head and a malicious heart,
Always rendering more suspicious
The reputation of her who propagated it,
Than that of the person abused.
Of the young, the gay, the heedless fair,
Just launching into the dangerous sea of pleasure,
He was ever, unsolicited (sometimes unregarded),
The kind protector:
Humanely correcting even their mistakes in dress,
As well as improprieties in conduct:
Nay, often warning them,
Though at the hazard of his life,
Against the artful snares of designing men,
Or an improper acquaintance with women of doubtful characters.
Thus did he establish his government on pillars
Of honor and politeness,
Which could never be shaken:
And maintained it, for full half a century,
With reputation, honor, and undisputed authority,
Beloved, respected, and revered.
Of his private character, be it the first praise,
That while, by his conduct, the highest ranks became his subjects,
He himself became
The servant of the poor and the distressed:
Whose cause he ever pleaded amongst the rich,
And enforced with all the eloquence of a good example:
They were ashamed not to relieve those wants

Digitized by Google

To which they saw him administer with
So noble a heart, and so liberal a hand.
Nor was his munificence confined to particulars,
He being, to all the public charities of the city,
A liberal benefactor;
Not only by his own most generous subscriptions,
But, by always assuming, in their behalf, the character of
A sturdy beggar;
Which he performed with such an authoritative address
To all ranks, without distinction,
That few of the worst hearts had courage to refuse
What their own inclinations would not have prompted them to bestow.
Of a noble public spirit
And
A warm and grateful heart,
The obelisk in the grove,
And
The beautiful needle in the square,
Are magnificent testimonies.

The One
Erected to preserve the memory of a
Most interesting event to his country,
The restitution of health, by the healing waters of this place,
To the illustrious prince of Orange,
Who came hither in a most languishing condition:

The Other,
A noble offering of thanks
To the late Prince of WALES, and his royal Consort,
For favors bestowed,
And honors by them conferred, on this city.

His long and peaceful reign, of
Absolute power,
Was so tempered by his
Excessive good-nature,
That no instance can be given either of his own cruelty,
Or of his suffering that of others to escape
Its proper reward.
Example unprecedented amongst absolute monarchs.

Digitized by Google

READER.

This monarch was a man,
And had his foibles and his faults;
Which we would wish covered with the veil of good-nature,
Made of the same piece with his own:
But, truth forceth us unwillingly to confess,
His passions were strong;
Which, as they fired him to act strenuously in good,
Hurried him to some excesses of evil.
His fire, not used to be kept under by an early restraint,
Burst out too often into flaming acts,
Without waiting for the cool approbation of his judgment.
His generosity was so great,
That prudence often whispered him, in vain,
That she feared it would enter the neighboring confines of profusion:
His charity so unbounded,
That the severe might suspect it sometimes to be
The offspring of folly, or ostentation.
With all these,
Be they foibles, follies, faults, or frailties,
It will be difficult to point out,
Amongst his temporary Kings of the whole earth,
More than ONE
Who hath fewer, or less pernicious to mankind.
His existence
(For life it scarcely might be called)
Was spun to so great an age, that
The man
Was sunk, like many former heroes, in
The weakness and infirmities of exhausted nature;
The unwilling tax all animals must pay
For multiplicity of days.
Over his closing scene,
Charity long spread her all-covering mantle,
And long dropped the curtain,
Before the poor actor, though he had played his part,
Was permitted to quit the stage.
Now may she protect his memory!
Every friend of Bath,
Every lover of decency, decorum, and good breeding,
Must sincerely deplore

Digitized by Google

The loss of so excellent a governor;
And join in the most fervent wishes (would I could say hopes!)
That there may soon be found a man
Able and worthy
To succeed him.

The reader sees in what alluring colors Nash's character is drawn; but he must consider, that an intimate friend held the pencil: the Doctor professes to say nothing of the dead but what was good; and such a maxim, though it serves his departed friend, is but badly calculated to improve the living. Dr. King,* in his epitaph, however, is still more indulgent; he produces him as an example to kings, and prefers his laws even to those of Solon or Lycurgus.

EPITAPHIUM RICHARDI NASH, ARMIGERI.

H. S. E.
RICHARDUS NASH,
Obscuro loco natus,
Et nullis ortus majoribus:
Cui tamen
(O rem miram, et incredibilem!)
Regnum opulentissimum florentissimumque
Plebs, proceres, principes,
Liberis suis suffragiis
Ultrò detulerunt,
Quod et ipse summâ cum dignitate tenuit,
Annos plus quinquaginta,
Universo populo consentiente, approbante, plaudente.
Una voce præterea, unoque omnium ordinum consensu,
Ad imperium suum adjuncta est
Magni nominis† Provincia:
Quam admirabili consilio et ratione
Per se, non unquam per legatos, administravit;
Eam quotannis invisere dignatus,
Et apud provinciales, quoad necesse fuit,
Solitus manere.

* [Dr. William King, author of "The Toast," a celebrated political satire, &c. He died in 1763.]

† Tunbridge.

Digitized by Google

In tantâ fortunâ
Neque fastu turgidus Rex incessu patuit,
Neque, tyrannorum more, se jussit coli,
Aut amplos honores, titulosque sibi arrogavit;
Sed cuncta insignia, etiam regium diadema rejiciens,
Caput contentus fuit ornare
Galero Albo,
Manifesto animi sui candoris signo.

Legislator prudentissimus,
Vel Solone et Lycurgo illustrior,
Leges, quascunque voluit,
Statuit, fixit, promulgavit;
Omnes quidem cùm civibus suis,
Tum verò hospitibus, advenis, peregrinis
Gratas, jucundas, utiles.

Voluptatem arbiter et minister,
Sed gravis, sed elegans, sed urbanus,
Et in summâ comitate satis adhibens severitatis,
Imprimis curavit,
Ut in virorum et fœminarum cœtibus
Nequis impudentur faceret,
Neque in iis quod inesset
Impuritatis, clamoris, tumulti.

Civitatem hanc celeberrimam,
Delicias suas.
Non modò pulcherrimis ædificiis auxit,
Sed præclarâ disciplinâ et moribus ornavit:
Quippe nemo quisquam
To Prepon melius intellexit, excoluit, docuit.

Justus, liberalis, benignus, facetus,
Atque amicus omnibus, præcipuè miseris et egenis,
Nullos habuit inimicos,
Præter magnos quosdam ardelionos,
Et declamatores eos tristes et fanaticos,
Qui generi humano sunt inimicissimi.

Pacis et patriæ amans,
Concordiam, felicem et perpetuam,
In regno suo constituit,
Usque adeò,

Digitized by Google

Ut nullus alteri petulanter maledicere,
Aut facto nocere auderet;
Neque, tanquam sibi metuens,
In publicum armatus prodire.

Fuit quanquam potentissimus,
Omnia arbitrio suo gubernans;
Haud tamen ipsa libertas
Magis usquam floruit
Gratiâ, gloriâ, auctoritate.
Singulare enim temperamentum invenit,
(Rem magnæ cogitationis,
Et rerum omnium fortasse difficillimam)
Quo ignobiles cum nobilibus, pauperes cum divitibus,
Indocti cum doctissimis, ignavi cum fortissimis
Æquari se putarent,
Rex Omnibus Idem.

Quicquid Peccaverit,
(Nam peccamus omnes)
In seipsum magis, quàm in alios,
Et errore, aut imprudentiâ magis quam scelere, aut improbitate.

Peccavit;
Nusquam verò ignoratione decori, aut honesti,
Neque ità quidem usquam,
Ut non veniam ab humanis omnibus
Facilè impetrârit.

Hujus vitæ morumque exemplar
Si cæteri reges, regulique,
Et quotquot sunt regnorum præfecti,
Imitarentur;
(Utinam! iterumque utinam!)
Et ipsi essent beati,
Et cunctæ orbis regiones beatissimæ.

Talem virum, tantumque ademptum
Lugeant musæ, charitesque!
Lugeant Veneres, Cupidinesque!
Lugeant omnes juvenum et nympharum chori!
Tu verò, O Bathonia,
Ne cesses tuum lugere
Principem, præceptorem, amicum, patronum;
Heu, heu, nunquam posthàc
Habitura parem!

Digitized by Google

The following translation of this Epitaph will give the English reader an idea of its contents, though not of its elegance:—

THE EPITAPH OF RICHARD NASH, ESQ.

Here lies
RICHARD NASH,
Born in an obscure village,
And from mean ancestors,
To whom, however,
Strange to relate,
Both the vulgar and the mighty,
Without bribe or compulsion,
Unanimously gave
A kingdom equally rich and flourishing,
A kingdom which he governed
More than fifty years,
With universal approbation and applause.
To his empire also was added,
By the consent of all orders,
A celebrated province,*
Which he ever swayed with great prudence,
Not by delegated power, but in person.
He deigned to visit it every year,
And while the necessities of state demanded his presence
He usually continued there.
In such greatness of fortune
His pride discovered itself by no marks of dignity;
Nor did he ever claim the honors of prostration,
Despising at once titles of adulation,
And laying aside all royal splendor,
Wearing not even the diadem,
He was content with being distinguished
Only by the ornamental ensign
Of a white hat;
A symbol of the candor of his mind.
He was a most prudent legislator,
And more remarkable even than Solon or Lycurgus.
He at once established and authorized
Whatever laws were thought convenient,
Which were equally serviceable to the city,

* Tunbridge.

Digitized by Google

And grateful to strangers,
Who made it their abode.
He was at once a provider and a judge of pleasures,
But still conducted them with gravity and elegance,
And repressed licentiousness with severity.
His chief care was employed
In preventing obscenity or impudence
From offending the modesty or the morals
Of the Fair Sex.
And in banishing from their Assemblies
Tumult, clamor, and abuse.
He not only adorned this city,
Which he loved,
With beautiful structures,
But improved it by his example;
As no man knew, no man taught, what was becoming
Better than he.
He was just, liberal, kind, and facetious;
A friend to all, but particularly to the poor.
He had no enemies,
Except some of the trifling great,
Or dull declaimers, foes to all mankind.
Equally a lover of peace and of his country;
He fixed a happy and lasting concord
In his kingdom,
So that none dare convey scandal, or injure by open violence
the universal peace,
Or even by carrying arms appear prepared for war,
With impunity.

But though his power was boundless,
Yet never did liberty flourish more, which he promoted,
Both by his authority, and cultivated for his fame.
He found out the happy secret
(A thing not to be considered without surprise)
Of uniting the vulgar and the great,
The poor and the rich,
The learned and ignorant,
The cowardly and the brave,
In the bonds of society, an equal king to all.

Whatever his faults were,
For we all have faults,

Digitized by Google

They were rather obnoxious to himself than others;
They arose either from imprudence or mistake,
Never from dishonesty or corrupt principle,
But so harmless were they,
That though they failed to create our esteem,
Yet can they not want our pardon.

Could other kings and governors
But learn to imitate his example,
(Would to heaven they could!)
Then might they see themselves happy,
And their people still enjoying more true felicity.

Ye Muses and Graces mourn
His death;
Ye powers of Love, ye choirs of youth and virgins,
But thou, O Bathonia! more than the rest,
Cease not to weep,
Your king, your teacher, patron, friend,
Never, ah, never, to behold
His equal.

Whatever might have been justly observed of Nash's superiority as a governor, at least it may be said, that few contemporary kings have met with such able panegyrists. The former enumerates all his good qualities with tenderness, and the latter enforces them with impetuosity. They both seem to have loved him, and honorably paid his remains the last debt of friendship. But a cool biographer, unbiassed by resentment or regard, will probably find nothing in the man either truly great, or strongly vicious. His virtues were all amiable, and more adapted to procure friends than admirers; they were more capable of raising love than esteem. He was naturally endued with good sense; but by having been long accustomed to pursue trifles, his mind shrunk to the size of the little objects on which it was employed. His generosity was boundless, because his tenderness and his vanity were in equal proportion; the one impelling him to relieve misery, and the other to make his benefactions known.

Digitized by Google

In all his actions, however virtuous, he was guided by sensation and not by reason; so that the uppermost passion was ever sure to prevail.

His being constantly in company had made him an easy though not a polite companion. He chose to be thought rather an odd fellow than a well-bred man; perhaps that mixture of respect and ridicule with which his mock royalty was treated, first inspired him with this resolution. The foundations of his empire were laid in vicious compliance, the continuance of his reign was supported by a virtuous impartiality. In the beginning of his authority, he in reality obeyed those whom he pretended to govern; towards the end, he attempted to extort a real obedience from his subjects, and supported his right by prescription. Like a monarch Tacitus talks of, they complied with him at first because they loved, they obeyed at last because they feared him. He often led the rich into new follies, in order to promote the happiness of the poor, and served the one at the expense of the other. Whatever his vices were, they were of use to society; and this neither Petronius, nor Apicius, nor Tigellius, nor any other professed voluptuary could say. To set him up, as some do, for a pattern of imitation is wrong, since all his virtues received a tincture from the neighboring folly; to denounce peculiar judgments against him is equally unjust, as his faults raise rather our mirth than our detestation. He was fitted for the station in which fortune placed him. It required no great abilities to fill it, and few of great abilities but would have disdained the employment. He led a life of vanity, and long mistook it for happiness. Unfortunately, he was taught at last to know that a man of pleasure leads the most unpleasant life in the world.

The following Dissuasive against Gaming, in a letter from

Digitized by Google

Mr. * * * in Tunbridge to Lord ——— in London, was found among Nash's papers, and prepared by him for the press:*

"My Lord:—What I foresaw has arrived: poor Jenners, after losing all his fortune, has shot himself through the head. His losses to Bland were considerable, and his playing soon after with Spedding contributed to hasten his ruin. No man was ever more enamored of play, or understood it less. At whatever game he ventured his money, he was most usually the dupe, and still foolishly attributed to his bad luck those misfortunes that entirely proceeded from his want of judgment.

"After finding that he had brought on himself irreparable indigence and contempt, his temper, formerly so sprightly, began to grow gloomy and unequal: he grew more fond of solitude, and more liable to take offence at supposed injuries; in short, for a week before he shot himself, his friends were of opinion that he meditated some such horrid design. He was found in his chamber fallen on the floor, the bullet having glanced on the bone, and lodged behind his right eye.

"You remember, my lord, what a charming fellow this deluded man was once. How benevolent, just, temperate, and every way virtuous; the only faults of his mind arose from motives of humanity; he was too easy, credulous, and good-natured, and unable to resist temptation, when recommended by the voice of friendship. These foibles the vicious and the needy soon perceived, and what was at first a weakness they soon perverted into guilt; he became a gamester, and continued the infamous profession till he could support the miseries it brought with it no longer.

"I have often been not a little concerned to see the first introduction of a young man of fortune to the gaming-table. With what eagerness his company is courted by the whole fraternity of sharpers; how they find out his most latent wishes, in order to make way to his affections by gratifying them, and continue to hang upon him with the meanest degree of condescension. The youthful dupe no way suspecting, imagines himself surrounded by friends and gentlemen, and incapable of even suspecting that men of such seeming good sense and so genteel an appearance, should deviate from the laws of honor, walks into the snare, nor is he undeceived till schooled by the severity of experience.

"As I suppose no man would be a gamester unless he hoped to win, so I fancy it would be easy to reclaim him, if he was once effectually convinced,

* [The letter thus introduced, judging by the evidence of style, was written by Goldsmith himself. It has all his manner; the names and anecdotes mentioned were either fictitious, or probably gleaned from sources pretty generally known.]

Digitized by Google

that by continuing to play he must certainly lose. Permit me, my lord, to attempt this task, and to show, that no young gentleman by a year's run of play, and in a mixed company, can possibly be a gainer.

"Let me suppose, in the first place, that the chances on both sides are equal, that there are no marked cards, no pinching, shuffling, nor hiding; let me suppose that the players also have no advantage of each other in point of judgment, and still further let me grant, that the party is only formed at home, without going to the usual expensive places of resort frequented by gamesters. Even with all these circumstances in the young gamester's favor, it is evident he cannot be a gainer. With equal players, after a year's continuance of any particular game it will be found that, whatever has been played for, the winnings on either side are very inconsiderable, and most commonly nothing at all. Here, then, is a year's anxiety, pain, jarring, and suspense, and nothing gained; were the parties to sit down and professedly play for nothing, they would contemn the proposal; they would call it trifling away time, and one of the most insipid amusements in nature; yet, in fact, how do equal players differ? It is allowed that little or nothing can be gained; but much is lost; our youth, our time, those moments that may be laid out in pleasure or improvement, are foolishly squandered away in tossing cards, fretting at ill-luck, or even with a run of luck in our favor, fretting that our winnings are so small.

"I have now stated gaming in that point of view in which it is alone defensible, as a commerce carried on with equal advantage and loss to either party, and it appears, that the loss is great, and the advantage but small. But let me suppose the players not to be equal, but the superiority of judgment in our own favor. A person who plays under this conviction, however, must give up all pretensions to the approbation of his own mind, and is guilty of as much injustice as the thief who robbed a blind man because he knew he could not swear to his person.

"But, in fact, when I allowed the superiority of skill on the young beginner's side, I only granted an impossibility. Skill in gaming, like skill in making a watch, can only be acquired by long and painful industry. The most sagacious youth alive was never taught at once all the arts and all the niceties of gaming. Every passion must be schooled by long habit into caution and phlegm; the very countenance must be taught proper discipline; and he who would practise this art with success, must practise on his own constitution all the severities of a martyr, without any expectation of the reward. It is evident, therefore, every beginner must be a dupe, and can only be expected to learn his trade by losses, disappointments, and dishonor.

"If a young gentleman, therefore, begins to game, the commencements are sure to be to his disadvantage; and all that he can promise himself is, that the company he keeps, though superior in skill, are above taking advantage of his ignorance, and unacquainted with any sinister arts to correct fortune. But this, however, is but a poor hope at best, and, what is worse, most frequently a

Digitized by Google

false one. In general, I might almost have said always, those who live by gaming are not beholden to chance alone for their support, but take every advantage which they can practise without danger of detection. I know many are apt to say, and I have once said so myself, that after I have shuffled the cards, it is not in the power of a sharper to pack them; but at present I can confidently assure your lordship that such reasoners are deceived. I have seen men both in Paris, the Hague, and London, who, after three deals, could give whatever hands they pleased to all the company. However, the usual way with sharpers is to correct fortune thus but once in a night, and to play in other respects without blunder or mistake, and a perseverance in this practice always balances the year in their favor.

"It is impossible to enumerate all the tricks and arts practised upon cards; few but have seen those bungling poor fellows who go about at coffee-houses perform their clumsy feats, and yet, indifferently as they are versed in the trade, they often deceive us; when such as these are possessed of so much art, what must not those be, who have been bred up to gaming from their infancy, whose hands are not like those mentioned above, rendered callous by labor, who have continual practice in the trade of deceiving, and where the eye of the spectator is less upon its guard.

"Let the young beginner only reflect by what a variety of methods it is possible to cheat him, and perhaps it will check his confidence. His antagonists may act by signs and confederacy, and this he can never detect; they may cut to a particular card after three or four hands have gone about, either by having that card pinched, or broader than the rest, or by having an exceeding fine wire thrust between the folds of the paper, and just peeping out at the edge. Or the cards may be chalked with particular marks, which none but the sharper can understand, or a new pack may be slipped in at a proper opportunity. I have known myself, in Paris, a fellow thus detected with a tin case, containing two packs of cards, concealed within his shirt sleeve, and which, by means of a spring, threws the card ready packed into his hands. These and a hundred other arts may be practised with impunity and escape detection.

"The great error lies in imagining every fellow with a laced coat to be a gentleman. The address and transient behavior of a man of breeding are easily acquired, and none are better qualified than gamesters in this respect. At first, their complaisance, civility, and apparent honor is pleasing, but upon examination, few of them will be found to have their minds sufficiently stored with any of the more refined accomplishments which truly characterize the man of breeding. This will commonly serve as a criterion to distinguish them, though there are other marks which every young gentleman of fortune should be apprised of. A sharper, when he plays, generally handles and deals the cards awkwardly, like a bungler; he advances his bets by degrees, and keeps his antagonist in spirits by small advantages and alternate

Digitized by Google

success at the beginning; to show all his force at once, would but fright the bird he intends to decoy; he talks of honor and virtue, and his being a gentleman, and that he knows great men, and mentions his coal-mines, and his estate in the country; he is totally divested of that masculine confidence which is the attendant of real fortune; he turns, yields, assents, smiles, as he hopes will be most pleasing to his destined prey; he is afraid of meeting a shabby acquaintance, particularly if in better company; as he grows richer he wears finer clothes; and if ever he is seen in an undress, it is most probable he is without money; so that seeing a gamester growing finer each day, it is a certain symptom of his success.

"The young gentleman who plays with such men for considerable sums, is sure to be undone, and yet we seldom see even the rook himself make a fortune. A life of gaming must necessarily be a life of extravagance; parties of this kind are formed in houses where the whole profits are consumed, and while those who play mutually ruin each other, they only who keep the house or the table acquire fortunes. Thus gaming may readily ruin a fortune, but has seldom been found to retrieve it. The wealth which has been acquired with industry and hazard, and preserved for ages by prudence and foresight, is swept away on a sudden; and when a besieging sharper sits down before an estate, the property is often transferred in less time than the writings can be drawn to secure the possession. The neglect of business, and the extravagance of a mind which has been taught to covet precarious possession, brings on premature destruction; though poverty may fetch a compass and go somewhat about, yet will it reach the gamester at last; and though his ruin be slow, yet it is certain.

"A thousand instances could be given of the fatal tendency of this passion, which first impoverishes the mind, and then perverts the understanding. Permit me to mention one, not caught from report, or dressed up by fancy, but such as has actually fallen under my own observation, and of the truth of which I beg your Lordship may rest satisfied.

"At Tunbridge, in the year 1715, Mr. J. Hedges made a very brilliant appearance. He had been married about two years to a young lady of great beauty and large fortune; they had one child, a boy, on whom they bestowed all that affection which they could spare from each other. He knew nothing of gaming, nor seemed to have the least passion for play; but he was unacquainted with his own heart; he began by degrees to bet at the tables for trifling sums, and his soul took fire at the prospect of immediate gain: he was soon surrounded with sharpers, who with calmness lay in ambush for his fortune, and coolly took advantage of the precipitancy of his passions.

"His lady perceived the ruin of her family approaching, but at first without being able to form any scheme to prevent it. She advised with his brother, who at that time was possessed of a small fellowship in Cambridge.

Digitized by Google

It was easily seen, that whatever took the lead in her husband's mind, seemed to be there fixed unalterably; it was determined, therefore, to let him pursue fortune, but previously take measures to prevent the pursuits being fatal.

"Accordingly, every night this gentleman was a constant attender at the hazard tables; he understood neither the arts of sharpers nor even the allowed strokes of a connoisseur, yet still he played. The consequence is obvious; he lost his estate, his equipage, his wife's jewels, and every other movable that could be parted with, except a repeating watch. His agony upon this occasion was inexpressible; he was even mean enough to ask a gentleman, who sat near, to lend him a few pieces, in order to turn his fortune; but this prudent gamester, who plainly saw there were no expectations of being repaid, refused to lend a farthing, alleging a former resolution against lending. Hedges was at last furious with the continuance of ill success, and pulling out his watch, asked if any person in company would set him sixty guineas upon it: the company were silent; he then demanded fifty; still no answer; he sunk to forty, thirty, twenty; finding the company still without answering, he swore that it should never go for less, and dashed it against the floor, at the same time attempting to dash out his brains against the marble chimney-piece.

"This last act of desperation immediately excited the attention of the whole company; they instantly gathered round, and prevented the effects of his passion; and after he again became cool, he was permitted to return home, with sullen discontent, to his wife. Upon his entering her apartment, she received him with her usual tenderness and satisfaction; while he answered her caresses with contempt and severity; his disposition being quite altered with his misfortunes. 'But my dear Jemmy,' says his wife, 'perhaps you don't know the news I have to tell; my mamma's old uncle is dead; the messenger is now in the house, and you know his estate is settled upon you.' This account seemed only to increase his agony, and looking angrily at her, he cried, 'there you lie, my dear, his estate is not settled upon me.—' I beg your pardon,' says she, 'I really thought it was, at least you have always told me so.' 'No,' returned he, 'as sure as you and I are to be miserable here, and our children beggars hereafter, I have sold the reversion of it this day, and have lost every farthing I got for it at the hazard table. 'What, all!' replied the lady.—'Yes, every farthing,' returned he, 'and I owe a thousand pounds more than I have to pay.' Thus speaking, he took a few frantic steps across the room. When the lady had a little enjoyed his perplexity: 'no, my dear,' cried she, 'you have lost but a trifle, and you owe nothing; our brother and I have taken care to prevent the effects of your rashness, and are actually the persons who have won your fortune; we employed proper persons for this purpose, who brought their winnings to me; your money, your equipage, are in my possession, and here I return them to you, from whom they were unjustly taken; I only ask permission to keep my jewels, and to keep you,

Digitized by Google

my greatest jewel, from such dangers for the future.' Her prudence had the proper effect, he ever after retained a sense of his former follies, and never played for the smallest sums, even for amusement.

"Not less than three persons in one day fell a sacrifice at Bath to this destructive passion. Two gentlemen fought a duel, in which one was killed, and the other desperately wounded; and a youth of great expectation and excellent disposition, at the same time ended his own life by a pistol. If there be any state that deserves pity, it must be that of a gamester; but the state of a dying gamester is of all situations the most deplorable.

"There is another argument which your lordship, I fancy, will not entirely despise: beauty, my lord, I own is at best but a trifle, but such as it is, I fancy few would willingly part with what little they have. A man with a healthful complexion, how great a philosopher soever he be, would not willingly exchange it for a sallow hectic phiz, pale eyes, and a sharp wrinkled visage. I entreat you only to examine the faces of all the noted gamblers round one of our public tables; have you ever seen any thing more haggard, pinched, and miserable? And it is but natural that it should be so. The succession of passions flush the cheek with red, and all such flushings are ever succeeded by consequent paleness; so that a gamester contracts the sickly hue of a student, while he is only acquiring the stupidity of a fool.

"Your good sense, my lord, I have often had an occasion of knowing, yet how miserable it is to be in a set of company where the most sensible is ever the least skilful; your footman, with a little instruction, would, I dare venture to affirm, make a better and more successful gamester than you; want of passions, and low cunning, are the two great arts; and it is peculiar to this science alone, that they who have the greatest passion for it, are of all others the most unfit to practise it.

"Of all the men I ever knew, Spedding was the greatest blockhead, and yet the best gamester; he saw almost intuitively the advantage on either side, and ever took it; he could calculate the odds in a moment, and decide upon the merits of a cock or a horse, better than any man in England; in short he was such an adept in gaming that he brought it up to a pitch of sublimity it had never attained before; yet, with all this, Spedding could not write his own name. What he died worth I cannot tell, but of this I am certain, he might have possessed a ministerial estate, and that won from men famed for their sense, literature, and patriotism.

"If, after this description, your lordship is yet resolved to hazard your fortune at gaming, I beg you would advert to the situation of an old luckless gamester. Perhaps there is not in nature a more deplorable being: his character is too well marked, he is too well known to be trusted. A man that has been often a bankrupt, and renewed trade upon low compositions, may as well expect extensive credit as such a man. His reputation is blasted: his constitution worn by the extravagance and ill hours of his profession; he is now

Digitized by Google

incapable of alluring his dupes, and like a superannuated savage of the forest, he is starved for want of vigor to hunt after prey.

"Thus gaming is the source of poverty, and still worse, the parent of infamy and vice. It is an inlet to debauchery, for the money thus acquired is but little valued. Every gamester is a rake, and his morals worse than his mystery. It is his interest to be exemplary in every scene of debauchery, his prey is to be courted with every guilty pleasure; but these are to be changed, repeated, and embellished, in order to employ his imagination, while his reason is kept asleep; a young mind is apt to shrink at the prospect of ruin; care must be taken to harden his courage, and make him keep his rank; he must be either found a libertine, or he must be made one. And when a man has parted with his money like a fool, he generally sends his conscience after it like a villain, and the nearer he is to the brink of destruction, the fonder does he grow of ruin.

"Your friend and mine, my lord, had been thus driven to the last reserve, for he found it impossible to disentangle his affairs, and look the world in the face; impatience at length threw him into the abyss he feared, and life became a burthen, because he feared to die. But I own that play is not always attended with such tragical circumstances: some have had courage to survive their losses, and go on content with beggary; and sure those misfortunes which are of our own production, are of all others most pungent. To see such a poor disbanded being an unwelcome guest at every table, and often flapped off like a fly, is affecting; in this case the closest alliance is forgotten, and contempt is too strong for the ties of blood to unbind.

"But, however fatal this passion may be in its consequence, none allures so much in the beginning; the person once listed as a gamester, if not soon reclaimed, pursues it through his whole life; no loss can retard, no danger awaken him to common sense; nothing can terminate his career but want of money to play, or of honor to be trusted.

"Among the number of my acquaintance, I knew but of two who succeeded by gaming; the one a phlegmatic heavy man, who would have made a fortune in whatever way of life he happened to be placed; the other who had lost a fine estate in his youth by play, and retrieved a greater at the age of sixty-five, when he might be justly said to be past the power of enjoying it. One or two successful gamesters are thus set up in an age to allure the young beginner; we all regard such as the highest prize in a lottery, unmindful of the numerous losses that go to the accumulation of such unfrequent success.

"Yet I would not be so morose as to refuse your youth all kinds of play; the innocent amusements of a family must often be indulged, and cards allowed to supply the intervals of more real pleasure; but the sum played for in such cases should always be a trifle; something to call up attention, but not engage the passions. The usual excuse for laying large sums is, to make the players attend to their game; but, in fact, he that plays only for shillings, will mind his cards equally well with him that bets guineas; for the mind

Digitized by Google

habituated to stake large sums, will consider them as trifles at last; and if one shilling could not exclude indifference at first, neither will a hundred in the end.

"I have often asked myself, how it is possible that he who is possessed of competence, can ever be induced to make it precarious by beginning play with the odds against him; for wherever he goes to sport his money, he will find himself over-matched and cheated. Either at White's, Newmarket, the Tennis Court, the Cock Pit, or the Billiard Table, he will find numbers who have no other resource but their acquisitions there; and if such men live like gentlemen, he may readily conclude it must be on the spoils of his fortune, or the fortunes of ill-judging men like himself. Was he to attend but a moment to their manner of betting at those places, he would readily find the gamester seldom proposing bets but with the advantage in his own favor. A man of honor continues to lay on the side on which he first won; but gamesters shift, change, lie upon the lurch, and take every advantage, either of our ignorance or neglect.

"In short, my lord, if a man designs to lay out his fortune in quest of pleasure, the gaming table is, of all other places, that where he can have least for his money. The company are superficial, extravagant, and unentertaining; the conversation flat, debauched, and absurd; the hours unnatural and fatiguing; the anxiety of losing is greater than the pleasure of winning; friendship must be banished from that society the members of which are intent only on ruining each other; every other improvement, either in knowledge or virtue, can scarce find room in that breast which is possessed by the spirit of play; the spirits become vapid, the constitution is enfeebled, the complexion grows pale, till, in the end, the mind, body, friends, fortune, and even the hopes of futurity sink together! Happy, if nature terminates the scene, and neither justice nor suicide are called in to accelerate her tardy approach. I am, my lord," &c.

As the heart of a man is better known by his private than his public actions, let us take a view of Nash in domestic life; among his servants and dependents, where no gloss was required to color his sentiments and disposition, nor any mask necessary to conceal his foibles. Here we shall find him the same open-hearted, generous, good-natured man we have already described; one who was ever fond of promoting the interests of his friends, his servants, and dependents, and making them happy. In his own house no man perhaps was more regular, cheerful, and benefi-

Digitized by Google

cent than Nash. His table was always free to those who sought his friendship, or wanted a dinner; and after grace was said, he usually accosted the company in the following extraordinary manner, to take off all restraint and ceremony: "Come, gentlemen, eat and welcome; spare, and the devil choke you." I mention this circumstance for no other reason but because it is well known, and is consistent with the singularity of his character and behavior.

As Nash's thoughts were entirely employed in the affairs of his government, he was seldom at home but at the time of eating or of rest. His table was well served, but his entertainment consisted principally of plain dishes. Boiled chicken and roast mutton were his favorite meats, and he was so fond of the small sort of potatoes, that he called them English pine-apples, and generally eat them as others do fruit, after dinner. In drinking he was altogether as regular and abstemious. Both in this and in eating, he seemed to consult nature, and obey only her dictates. Good small beer, with or without a glass of wine in it, and sometimes wine and water, was his drink at meals, and after dinner he generally drank one glass of wine. He seemed fond of hot suppers, usually supped about nine or ten o'clock, upon roast breast of mutton and his potatoes, and soon after supper went to bed; which induced Dr. Cheyne to tell him jestingly, that he behaved like other brutes, and laid down as soon as he had filled his belly. "Very true," replied Nash, "and this prescription I had from my neighbor's cow, who is a better physician than you, and a superior judge of plants, notwithstanding you have written so learnedly on the vegetable diet."

Nash generally arose early in the morning, being seldom in bed after five; and to avoid disturbing the family and depriving his servants of their rest, he had the fire laid after he was in bed, and in the morning lighted it himself, and sat down to read

Digitized by Google

some of his few but well-chosen books. After reading some time, he usually went to the pump-room and drank the waters; then took a walk on the parade, and went to the coffee-house to breakfast; after which, till two o'clock (his usual time of dinner) his hours were spent in arbitrating differences amongst his neighbors, or the company resorting to the wells; in directing the diversions of the day, visiting the new comers, or receiving friends at his own house; of which there was a great concourse till within six or eight years before his death.

His generosity and charity in private life, though not so conspicuous, was as great as that in public, and indeed far more considerable than his little income would admit of. He could not stifle the natural impulse which he had to do good, but frequently borrowed money to relieve the distressed; and when he knew not conveniently where to borrow, he has been often observed to shed tears, as he passed through the wretched supplicants who attended his gate.

This sensibility, this power of feeling the misfortunes of the miserable, and his address and earnestness in relieving their wants, exalts the character of Nash, and draws an impenetrable veil over his foibles. His singularities are forgotten when we behold his virtues, and he who laughed at the whimsical character and behavior of this Monarch of Bath, now laments that he is no more.*

* [In 1790, a monument was erected to the memory of Nash in the Abbey Church, Bath, at the instigation, and chiefly at the expense of Dr. Harrington, who supplied the following epitaph:—

Adeste O Cives, adeste Lugentes!
Hic silent Leges
Richardi Nash, Armig.
Nihil amplius imperantis:
Qui diu et utilissimè
Assumptus Bathoniæ
Elegantiæ Arbiter,
Eheu!

Digitized by Google

Morti, (ultimo designatori)
Haud indecorè succubuit
Ann. Dom. MDCCLXI. Ætat suæ LXXXVII.
Beatus ille qui sibi imperiosus!

If social virtues make remembrance dear,
Or manners pure on decent rule depend;
To *His* remains consign one grateful tear,
Of youth the Guardian, and of all the Friend.

Now sleeps Dominion; here no Bounty flows,
Nor more avails the festive scene to grace,
Beneath that hand which no discernment shows,
Untaught to honor, or distinguish place.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIFE

OF

THOMAS PARNELL, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF CLOGHER.

[*First published in June*, 1770. See LIFE, ch. XX.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIFE

OF

THOMAS PARNELL, D.D.

The life of a scholar seldom abounds with adventure. His fame is acquired in solitude; and the historian, who only views him at a distance, must be content with a dry detail of actions by which he is scarcely distinguished from the rest of mankind. But we are fond of talking of those who have given us pleasure; not that we have any thing important to say, but because the subject is pleasing.

Thomas Parnell, D.D., was descended from an ancient family, that had for some centuries been settled at Congleton, in Cheshire. His father, Thomas Parnell, who had been attached to the Commonwealth party, upon the Restoration went over to Ireland; thither he carried a large personal fortune, which he laid out in lands in that kingdom. The estates he purchased there, as also that of which he was possessed in Cheshire, descended to our poet, who was his eldest son, and still remain in the family. Thus want, which has compelled many of our greatest men into the service of the muses, had no influence upon Parnell; he was a poet by inclination.

He was born in Dublin, in the year 1679, and received the

Digitized by Google

first rudiments of his education at the school of Dr. Jones, in that city. Surprising things are told us of the greatness of his memory at that early period; as of his being able to repeat by heart forty lines of any book at the first reading; of his getting the third book of the Iliad in one night's time, which was given in order to confine him for some days. These stories, which are told of almost every celebrated wit, may perhaps be true; but for my own part, I never found any of those prodigies of parts, although I have known enow that were desirous, among the ignorant, of being thought so.

There is one presumption, however, of the early maturity of his understanding. He was admitted a member of the College of Dublin at the age of thirteen, which is much sooner than usual, as at that university they are a great deal stricter in their examination for entrance, than either at Oxford or Cambridge. His progress through the college course of study was probably marked with but little splendor; his imagination might have been too warm to relish the cold logic of Burgersdicius, or the dreary subtleties of Smiglesius; but it is certain, that as a classical scholar, few could equal him. His own compositions show this; and the deference which the most eminent men of his time paid him upon that head, put it beyond a doubt. He took the degree of master of arts the 9th of July, 1700; and in the same year he was ordained a deacon by William, bishop of Derry, having a dispensation from the primate, as being under twenty-three years of age. He was admitted into priest's orders about three years after, by William, archbishop of Dublin; and on the 9th of February, 1705, he was collated by Sir George Ashe, bishop of Clogher, to the archdeaconry of Clogher.

About that time also he married Miss Anne Minchin, a young lady of great merit and beauty, by whom he had two sons, who died young, and one daughter, who is still living. His wife died

Digitized by Google

some time before him; and her death is said to have made so great an impression on his spirits, that it served to hasten his own. On the 31st of May, 1716, he was presented by his friend and patron, archbishop King, to the vicarage of Finglas, a benefice worth about four hundred pounds a year, in the diocese of Dublin; but he lived to enjoy his preferment a very short time. He died at Chester, in July, 1717, on his way to Ireland, and was buried in Trinity Church in that town, without any monument to mark the place of his interment.* As he died without male issue, his estate devolved to his only nephew, Sir John Parnell, baronet, whose father was younger brother to the archdeacon, and one of the justices of the King's Bench in Ireland.

Such is the very unpoetical detail of the life of a poet. Some dates, and some few facts scarcely more interesting than those that make the ornaments of a country tomb-stone, are all that remain of one whose labors now begin to excite universal

* Since the above passage was printed off, the editor has been favored with the following communication from Mr. Donovan, of Anson-street, Liverpool:

"In the summer of 1834, I happened to be for a short time in Chester, and, among other little pursuits to which I devoted my leisure hours while there, I endeavored to discover whether Parnell was really interred without any monument in Trinity Church in that city, as Goldsmith writes, or not. I made the search among the monuments which I proposed, and made also minute inquiries, but in vain; and I think I may say, that no monument does exist. My next inquiry was, whether they had even any record of his interment; and to ascertain this, I obtained permission to search the Registry. I examined without effect the year 1717, but, pursuing the list, I found, to my no small surprise, the following entry, in its proper order of date, in the register of interments of 1718:—

'Thomas Parnell, D. D.
'18 *October*, 1718,'

being one year and three months after the time which Goldsmith mentions as the period of his decease."

Digitized by Google

curiosity. A poet, while living, is seldom an object sufficiently great to attract much attention; his real merits are known but to a few, and, these are generally sparing in their praises. When his fame is increased by time, it is then too late to investigate the peculiarities of his disposition; the dews of the morning are past, and we vainly try to continue the chase by the meridian splendor.

There is scarcely any man but might be made the subject of a very interesting and amusing history, if the writer, besides a thorough acquaintance with the character he draws, were able to make those nice distinctions which separate it from all others. The strongest minds have usually the most striking peculiarities, and would consequently afford the richest materials: but in the present instance, from not knowing Dr. Parnell, his peculiarities are gone to the grave with him; and we are obliged to take his character from such as knew but little of him, or who, perhaps, could have given very little information if they had known more.

Parnell, by what I have been able to collect from my father and uncle, who knew him, was the most capable man in the world to make the happiness of those he conversed with, and the least able to secure his own. He wanted that evenness of disposition which bears disappointment with phlegm, and joy with indifference. He was ever very much elated or depressed, and his whole life was spent in agony or rapture. But the turbulence of these passions only affected himself, and never those about him; he knew the ridicule of his own character, and very effectually raised the mirth of his companions, as well at his vexations as at his triumphs.

How much his company was desired, appears from the extensiveness of his connections, and the number of his friends. Even before he made any figure in the literary world, his friendship was sought by persons of every rank and party. The wits

Digitized by Google

at that time differed a good deal from those who are most eminent for their understanding at present. It would now be thought a very indifferent sign of a writer's good sense, to disclaim his private friends for happening to be of a different party in politics; but it was then otherwise; the Whig wits held the Tory wits in great contempt, and these retaliated in their turn. At the head of one party were Addison, Steele, and Congreve; at that of the other, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. Parnell was a friend to both sides, and with a liberality becoming a scholar, scorned all those trifling distinctions, that are noisy for the time, and ridiculous to posterity. Nor did he emancipate himself from these without some opposition from home. Having been the son of a Commonwealth's man, his Tory connections on this side of the water gave his friends in Ireland great offence. They were much enraged to see him keep company with Pope, and Swift, and Gay; they blamed his undistinguishing taste, and wondered what pleasure he could find in the conversation of men who approved the treaty of Utrecht, and disliked the Duke of Marlborough. His conversation is said to have been extremely pleasing; but in what its peculiar excellence consisted is now unknown. The letters which were written to him by his friends, are full of compliments upon his talents as a companion, and his good-nature as a man. I have several of them now before me. Pope was particularly fond of his company, and seems to regret his absence more than any of the rest. A letter from him follows thus:

"London, July 29.

"DEAR SIR:—I wish it were not as ungenerous as vain to complain too much of a man that forgets me, but I could expostulate with you a whole day upon your inhuman silence: I call it inhuman; nor would you think it less, if you were truly sensible of the uneasiness it gives me. Did I know you so ill as to think you proud, I would be much less concerned than I am able to be, when I know one of the best-natured men alive neglects me; and if you know

Digitized by Google

me so ill as to think amiss of me, with regard to my friendship for you, you really do not deserve half the trouble you occasion me.

"I need not tell you, that both Mr. Gay and myself have written several letters in vain; and that we were constantly inquiring, of all who have seen Ireland, if they saw you, and that (forgotten as we are) we are every day remembering you in our most agreeable hours. All this is true: as that we are sincerely lovers of you, and deplorers of your absence, and that we form no wish more ardently than that which brings you over to us, and places you in your old seat between us. We have lately had some distant hopes of the Dean's design to revisit England: will not you accompany him? or is England to lose every thing that has any charms for us, and must we pray for banishment as a benediction? I have once been witness of some, I hope all of your splenetic hours: come, and be a comforter in your turn to me, in mine.

"I am in such an unsettled state, that I can't tell if I shall ever see you, unless it be this year: whether I do or not, be ever assured, you have as large a share of my thoughts and good wishes as any man, and as great a portion of gratitude in my heart as would enrich a monarch, could he know where to find it. I shall not die without testifying something of this nature, and leaving to the world a memorial of the friendship that has been so great a pleasure and pride to me. It would be like writing my own epitaph, to acquaint you with what I have lost since I saw you, what I have done, what I have thought, where I have lived, and where I now repose in obscurity. My friend Jervas, the bearer of this, will inform you of all particulars concerning me; and Mr. Ford is charged with a thousand loves, and a thousand complaints, and a thousand commissions to you on my part. They will both tax you with the neglect of some promises which were too agreeable to us all to be forgot: if you care for any of us, tell them so, and write so to me. I can say no more, but that I love you, and am, in spite of the longest neglect of happiness, dear sir, your most faithful affectionate friend and servant, A. Pope.

"Gay is in Devonshire, and from thence he goes to Bath. My father and mother never fail to commemorate you.'

Among the number of his most intimate friends was Lord Oxford, whom Pope has so finely complimented upon the delicacy of his choice.

"For him thou oft hast bid the world attend,
Fond to forget the statesman in the friend;
For Swift and him despis'd the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and great;
Dext'rous the craving, fawning crowd to quit,
And plea'sd to 'scape from flattery to wit."

Digitized by Google

Pope himself was not only excessively fond of his company, but under several literary obligations to him for his assistance in the translation of Homer. Gay was obliged to him upon another account; for, being always poor, he was not above receiving from Parnell the copy-money which the latter got for his writings. Several of their letters, now before me, are proofs of this; and as they have never appeared before, it is probable the reader will be much better pleased with their idle effusions, than with any thing I can hammer out for his amusement.

"Binfield, near Oakingham, Tuesday.

DEAR SIR:—I believe the hurry you were in hindered your giving me a word by the last post, so that I am yet to learn whether you got well to town, or continue so there. I very much fear both for your health and your quiet; and no man living can be more truly concerned in any thing that touches either than myself. I would comfort myself, however, with hoping, that your business may not be unsuccessful, for your sake; and that at least it may soon be put into other proper hands. For my own, I beg earnestly of you to return to us as soon as possible. You know how very much I want you; and that, however your business may depend on any other, my business depends entirely upon you; and yet still I hope you will find your man, even though I lose you the mean while. At this time, the more I love you, the more I can spare you; which alone will, I dare say, be a reason to you to let me have you back the sooner.

"The minute I lost you, Eustathius, with nine hundred pages and nine thousand contradictions of the Greek characters, arose to view! Spondanus, with all his auxiliaries, in number a thousand pages (value three shillings), and Dacier's three volumes, Barnes's two, Valterie's three, Cuperus, half in Greek, Leo Allatus, three parts in Greek, Scaliger, Macrobius, and (worse than all) Aulus Gellius! All these rushed upon my soul at once, and whelmed me under a fit of the headache. I cursed them all religiously, damned my best friends among the rest, and even blasphemed Homer himself.

"Dear sir, not only as you are a friend, and a good-natured man, but as you are a Christian and a divine, come back speedily, and prevent the increase of my sins; for, at the rate I have begun to rave, I shall not only damn all the poets and commentators who have gone before me, but be damned myself by all who come after me. To be serious; you have not only left me to the last degree impatient for your return, who at all times should have been so (though never so much as since I knew you in the best health here), but you have wrought several miracles upon our family; you have made old people fond of

Digitized by Google

a young and gay person, and inveterate papists of a clergyman of the church of England; even nurse herself is in danger of being in love in her old age, and (for all I know) would even marry Dennis for your sake, because he is your man, and loves his master. In short, come down forthwith, or give me good reasons for delaying, though but a day or two, by the next post. If I find them just, I will come up to you, though you know how precious my time is at present: my hours were never worth so much money before; but perhaps you are not sensible of this, who give away your own works. You are a generous author; I a hackney scribbler: you a Grecian, and bred at a university; I a poor Englishman, of my own educating: you a reverend parson, I a wag; in short, you are Dr. Parnelle (with an *e* at the end of your name), and I, your most obliged and affectionate friend and faithful servant,

"A. Pope.

"My hearty service to the Dean, Dr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Ford, and the true genuine shepherd, J. Gay of Devon. I expect him down with you."

We may easily perceive by this, that Parnell was not a little necessary to Pope in conducting his translation; however, he has worded it so ambiguously, that it is impossible to bring the charge directly against him. But he is much more explicit when he mentions his friend Gay's obligations in another letter, which he takes no pains to conceal.

"Dear Sir:—I write to you with the same warmth, the same zeal of goodwill and friendship, with which I used to converse with you two years ago, and can't think myself absent, when I feel you so much at my heart. The picture of you which Jervas brought me over, is infinitely less lively a representation than that I carry about with me, and which rises to my mind whenever I think of you. I have many an agreeable reverie through those woods and downs where we once rambled together; my head is sometimes at the Bath, and sometimes at Letcomb, where the Dean makes a great part of my imaginary entertainment, this being the cheapest way of treating me; I hope he will not be displeased at this manner of paying my respects to him, instead of following my friend Jervas's example, which, to say the truth, I have as much inclination to do as I want ability.

"I have been ever since December last in greater variety of business than any such men as you (that is, divines and philosophers) can possibly imagine a reasonable creature capable of. Gay's play, among the rest, has cost much time and long-suffering, to stem a tide of malice and party, that certain authors have raised against it; the best revenge on such fellows is now in my

Digitized by Google

hands, I mean your Zoilus, which really transcends the expectations I had conceived of it. I have put it into the press, beginning with the poem Batrachom; for you seem, by the first paragraph of the dedication of it, to design to prefix the name of some particular person. I beg, therefore, to know for whom you intend it, that the publication may not be delayed on this account, and this as soon as is possible. Inform me also upon what terms I am to deal with the bookseller, and whether you design the copy-money for Gay, as you formerly talked; what number of books you would have yourself, &c. I scarcely see any thing to be altered in this whole piece; in the poems you sent I will take the liberty you allow me: the story of Pandora, and the Eclogue upon Health, are two of the most beautiful things I ever read. I do not say this to the prejudice of the rest, but as I have read these oftener. Let me know how far my commission is to extend, and be confident of my punctual performance of whatever you enjoin. I must add a paragraph on this occasion in regard to Mr. Ward, whose verses have been a great pleasure to me; I will contrive they shall be so to the world, whenever I can find a proper opportunity of publishing them.

"I shall very soon print an entire collection of my own madrigals, which I look upon as making my last will and testament, since in it I shall give all I ever intend to give (which I'll beg your's and the Dean's acceptance of). You must look on me no more a poet, but a plain commoner, who lives upon his own, and fears and flatters no man. I hope before I die to discharge the debt I owe to Homer, and get upon the whole just fame enough to serve for an annuity for my own time, though I leave nothing to posterity.

"I beg our correspondence may be more frequent than it has been of late. I am sure my esteem and love for you never more deserved it from you, or more prompted it from you. I desired our friend Jervas (in the greatest hurry of my business) to say a great deal in my name, both to yourself and the Dean, and must once more repeat the assurances to you both, of an unchanging friendship and unalterable esteem. I am, dear sir, most entirely, your affectionate, faithful, obliged friend and servant,

"A. Pope."

From these letters to Parnell, we may conclude, as far as their testimony can go, that he was an agreeable, a generous, and a sincere man. Indeed, he took care that his friends should always see him to the best advantage; for, when he found his fits of spleen and uneasiness, which sometimes lasted for weeks together, returning, he returned with all expedition to the remote parts of Ireland, and there made out a gloomy kind of satisfaction, in

Digitized by Google

giving hideous descriptions of the solitude to which he retired. It is said of a famous painter, that, being confined in prison for debt, his whole delight consisted in drawing the faces of his creditors in caricature. It was just so with Parnell. From many of his unpublished pieces which I have seen, and from others that have appeared, it would seem that scarcely a bog in his neighborhood was left without reproach, and scarcely a mountain reared its head unsung. "I can easily," says Pope, in one of his letters, in answer to a dreary description of Parnell's, "I can easily image to my thoughts the solitary hours of your eremitical life in the mountains, for some parallel to it in my own retirement at Binfield:" and in another place, "We are both miserably enough situated, God knows; but of the two evils, I think the solitudes of the South are to be preferred to the deserts of the West." In this manner Pope answered him in the tone of his own complaints; and these descriptions of the imagined distress of his situation served to give him a temporary relief: they threw off the blame from himself, and laid upon fortune and accident a wretchedness of his own creating.

But though this method of quarrelling in his poems with his situation, served to relieve himself, yet it was not easily endured by the gentlemen of the neighborhood, who did not care to confess themselves his fellow-sufferers. He received many mortifications upon that account among them; for, being naturally fond of company, he could not endure to be without even theirs, which, however, among his English friends he pretended to despise. In fact, his conduct, in this particular, was rather splenetic than wise; he had either lost the art to engage, or did not employ his skill in securing those more permanent, though more humble connections, and sacrificed for a month or two in England, a whole year's happiness by his country fireside at home.

However, what he permitted the world to see of his life was

Digitized by Google

elegant and splendid; his fortune (for a poet) was very considerable, and it may easily be supposed he lived to the very extent of it. The fact is, his expenses were greater than his income, and his successor found the estate somewhat impaired at his decease. As soon as ever he had collected in his annual revenues, he immediately set out for England, to enjoy the company of his dearest friends, and laugh at the more prudent world that were minding business and gaining money. The friends to whom, during the latter part of his life, he was chiefly attached, were Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Jervas, and Gay. Among these he was particularly happy; his mind was entirely at ease, and gave a loose to every harmless folly that came uppermost. Indeed, it was a society in which, of all others, a wise man might be most foolish, without incurring any danger or contempt. Perhaps the reader will be pleased to see a letter to him from a part of this junto, as there is something striking even in the levities of genius. It comes from Gay, Jervas, Arbuthnot, and Pope, assembled at a chop-house near the Exchange, and is as follows:

"My dear Sir:—I was last summer in Devonshire, and am this winter at Mrs. Bonyer's. In the summer I wrote a poem, and in the winter I have published it, which I have sent to you by Dr. Ellwood. In the summer I ate two dishes of toad-stools, of my own gathering, instead of mushrooms; and in the winter I have been sick with wine, as I am at this time, blessed be God for it! as I must bless God for all things. In the summer I spoke truth to damsels; in the winter I told lies to ladies. Now you know where I have been, and what I have done, I shall tell you what I intend to do the ensuing summer; I propose to do the same thing I did last, which was to meet you in any part of England you would appoint; don't let me have two disappointments. I have longed to hear from you, and to that intent I teased you with three or four letters; but, having no answer, I feared both yours and my letters might have miscarried. I hope my performance will please the Dean, whom I often wished for, and to whom I would have often wrote, but for the same reasons I neglected writing to you. I hope I need not tell you how I love you, and how glad I shall be to hear from you; which, next to the seeing you, would be the greatest satisfaction to your most affectionate friend and humble servant,

J. G."

Digitized by Google

"DEAR MR. ARCHDEACON:—Though my proportion of this epistle should be but a sketch in miniature, yet I take up this half page, having paid my club with the good company both for our dinner of chops and for this paper. The poets will give you lively descriptions in their way; I shall only acquaint you with that which is directly my province. I have just set the last hand to a couplet; for so I may call two nymphs in one piece. They are Pope's favorites, and though few, you will guess must have cost me more pains than any nymphs can be worth. He has been so unreasonable as to expect that I should have made them as beautiful upon canvas, as he has done upon paper. If this same Mr. P. should omit to write for the dear frogs, and the Pervigilium, I must entreat you not to let me languish for them, as I have done ever since they have crossed the seas: remember by what neglects, &c. we missed them when we lost you, and therefore I have not yet forgiven any of those triflers that let them escape and run those hazards. I am going on at the old rate, and want you and the Dean prodigiously, and am in hopes of making you a visit this summer, and of hearing from you both, now you are together. Fortescue, I am sure, will be concerned that he is not in Cornhill, to set his hand to these presents, not only as a witness, but as a *serviteur tres-humble*, C. JERVAS."

"It is so great an honor to a poor Scotchman to be remembered at this time of day, especially by an inhabitant of the Glacialis Ierne, that I take it very thankfully, and have, with my good friends, remembered you at our table in the chop-house in Exchange-alley. There wanted nothing to complete our happiness but your company, and our dear friend the Dean's. I am sure the whole entertainment would have been to his relish. Gay has got so much money by his 'Art of Walking the Streets,' that he is ready to set up his equipage: he is just going to the Bank to negotiate some exchange-bills. Mr. Pope delays his second volume of his Homer till the martial spirit of the rebels is quite quelled; it being judged that the first part did some harm that way. Our love again and again to the dear Dean. *Fuimus torys*, I can say no more. ARBUTHNOT."

"When a man is conscious that he does no good himself, the next thing is to cause others to do some. I may claim some merit this way, in hastening this testimonial from your friends above-writing: their love to you indeed wants no spur, their ink wants no pen, their pen wants no hand, their hand wants no heart, and so forth, (after the manner of Rabelais; which is betwixt some meaning and no meaning); and yet it may be said, when present thought and opportunity is wanting, their pens want ink, their hands want pens, their hearts want hands, &c. till time, place, and conveniency, concur to set them writing, as at present, a sociable meeting, a good dinner, warm fire, and an easy situation do, to the joint labor and pleasure of this epistle.

Digitized by Google

"Wherein if I should say nothing I should say much (much being included in my love,) though my love be such, that if I should say much, I should yet say nothing, it being (as Cowley says) equally impossible either to conceal or to express it.

"If I were to tell you the thing I wish above all things, it is to see you again; the next is to see here your treatise of Zoilus, with the Batrachomuomachia, and the Pervigilium Veneris, both of which poems are masterpieces in several kinds; and I question not the prose is as excellent in its sort as the Essay on Homer. Nothing can be more glorious to that great author, than that the same hand that raised his best statue, and decked it with its old laurels, should also hang up the scarecrow of his miserable critic, and gibbet up the carcass of Zoilus, to the terror of the witlings of posterity. More, and much more, upon this and a thousand other subjects, will be the matter of my next letter, wherein I must open all the friend to you. At this time I must be content with telling you, I am faithfully your most affectionate and humble servant, A. Pope."

If we regard this letter with a critical eye, we must find it indifferent enough; if we consider it as a mere effusion of friendship, in which every writer contended in affection, it will appear much to the honor of those who wrote it. To be mindful of an absent friend in the hours of mirth and feasting, when his company is least wanted, shows no slight degree of sincerity. Yet probably there was still another motive for writing thus to him in conjunction. The above named, together with Swift and Parnell, had some time before formed themselves into a society, called the Scribblerus Club, and I should suppose they commemorated him thus, as being an absent member.

It is past a doubt that they wrote many things in conjunction, and Gay usually held the pen; and yet I do not remember any productions which were the joint effort of this society, as doing it honor. There is something feeble and quaint in all their attempts, as if company repressed thought, and genius wanted solitude for its boldest and happiest exertions. Of those productions in which Parnell had a principal share, that of the Origin of the Sciences from the Monkeys in Ethiopia, is particularly mentioned

Digitized by Google

by Pope himself, in some manuscript anecdotes which he left behind him.* The Life of Homer, also, prefixed to the translation of the Iliad, is written by Parnell and corrected by Pope; and, as that great poet assures us in the same place, this correction was not effected without great labor. "It is still stiff," says he, "and was written still stiffer; as it is, I verily think it cost me more pains in the correcting than the writing it would have done."† All this may be easily credited; for every thing of Parnell's that has appeared in prose, is written in a very awkward, inelegant manner. It is true, his productions teem with imagination, and show great learning; but they want that ease and sweetness for which his poetry is so much admired, and the language is also shamefully incorrect. Yet, though all this must be allowed, Pope should have taken care not to leave his errors upon record against him, or put it in the power of envy to tax his friend with faults that do not appear in what he has left to the world. A poet has a right to expect the same secrecy in his friend as in his confessor; the sins he discovers are not divulged for punishment but pardon. Indeed, Pope is almost inexcusable in this instance, as what he seems to condemn in one place he very much applauds in another. In one of the letters from him to Parnell, abovementioned, he treats the Life of Homer with much greater respect, and seems to say, that the prose is excellent in its kind. It must be confessed, however, that he is by no means inconsistent: what he says in both places may very easily be reconciled to truth; but who can defend his candor and sincerity?

It would be hard, however, to suppose that there was no real friendship between these great men. The benevolence of Parnell's disposition remains unimpeached; and Pope, though

* ["The Origin of the Sciences from the Monkeys in Ethiopia, was written by me, Dean Parnell, and Dr. Arbuthnot." Pope: Spence's Anecdotes, p. 201. Singer's edit. 1820.]

† [Spence's Anecdotes, p. 138.]

Digitized by Google

subject to starts of passion and envy, yet never missed an opportunity of being truly serviceable to him. The commerce between them was carried on to the common interest of both. When Pope had a Miscellany to publish, he applied to Parnell for poetical assistance, and the latter as implicitly submitted to him for correction. Thus they mutually advanced each other's interest or fame, and grew stronger by conjunction. Nor was Pope the only person to whom Parnell had recourse for assistance. We learn from Swift's letters to Stella, that he submitted his pieces to all his friends, and readily adopted their alterations. Swift, among the number, was very useful to him in that particular; and care has been taken that the world should not remain ignorant of the obligation.

But in the connection of wits, interest has generally very little share; they have only pleasure in view, and can seldom find it but among each other. The Scribblerus Club, when the members were in town, were seldom asunder; and they often made excursions together into the country, and generally on foot. Swift was usually the butt of the company; and if a trick was played he was always the sufferer. The whole party once agreed to walk down to the house of Lord B——,* who is still living, and whose seat is about twelve miles from town. As every one agreed to make the best of his way, Swift, who was remarkable for walking, soon left the rest behind him, fully resolved, upon his arrival, to choose the very best bed for himself; for that was his custom. In the mean time, Parnell was determined to prevent his intentions, and taking horse, arrived at Lord B——'s by another way, long before him. Having apprised his lordship of Swift's design, it was resolved, at

* [Lord Bathurst. He lived to extreme old age; and is alluded to by Burke, in one of his speeches on American affairs, as having witnessed almost the infancy and maturity of the colonies.]

Digitized by Google

any rate, to keep him out of the house; but how to effect this was the question. Swift never had the small-pox, and was very much afraid of catching it; as soon, therefore, as he appeared, striding along at a distance from the house, one of his lordship's servants was dispatched to inform him that the small-pox was then making great ravages in the family, but that there was a summer-house with a field-bed at his service, at the end of the garden. There the disappointed Dean was obliged to retire, and take a cold supper that was sent out to him, while the rest were feasting within. However, at last they took compassion on him; and, upon his promising never to choose the best bed again, they permitted him to make one of the company.

There is something satisfactory in these accounts of the follies of the wise: they give a natural air to the picture, and reconcile us to our own. There have been few poetical societies more talked of, or productive of a greater variety of whimsical conceits, than this of the Scribblerus Club; but how long it lasted I cannot exactly determine. The whole of Parnell's poetical existence was not of more than eight or ten years' continuance. His first excursions to England began about the year 1706, and he died in the year 1717:* so that it is probable the club began with him, and his death ended the connection. Indeed, the festivity of his conversation, the benevolence of his heart, and the generosity of his temper, were qualities that might serve to cement any society, and that could hardly be replaced when he was taken away. During the two or three last years of his life, he was more fond of company than ever, and could scarcely bear to be alone. The death of his wife, it is said, was a loss to him that he was unable to support or recover.† From that time he could never venture

* [He died in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year.]

† ["I am heartily sorry for poor Mrs. Parnell's death. She seemed to be an excellent, good-natured young woman, and I believe the poor lad is much afflicted."—Swift's Journal to Stella, Aug. 24, 1711.]

Digitized by Google

to court the muse in solitude; where he was sure to find the image of her who inspired his attempts. He began therefore to throw himself into every company, and to seek from wine, if not relief, at least insensibility.* Those helps that sorrow first called for assistance, habit soon rendered necessary, and he died before his fortieth year, in some measure a martyr to conjugal fidelity.

Thus in the space of a very few years, Parnell attained a share of fame, equal to what most of his contemporaries were a long life in acquiring. He is only to be considered as a poet; and the universal esteem in which his poems are held, and the reiterated pleasure they give in the perusal, are a sufficient test of their merit. He appears to me to be the last of that great school that had modelled itself upon the ancients, and taught English poetry to resemble what the generality of mankind have allowed to excel. A studious and correct observer of antiquity, he set himself to consider nature with the lights it lent him; and he found that the more aid he borrowed from the one, the more delightfully he resembled the other. To copy nature is a task the most bungling workman is able to execute; to select such parts as contribute to delight, is reserved only for those whom accident has blest with uncommon talents, or such as have read the ancients with indefatigable industry. Parnell is ever happy in the selection of his images, and scrupulously careful in the choice of his subjects. His productions

* [Ruffhead, on the authority of Warburton, has given a different account of the cause which led to Parnell's intemperance :—" When he had been introduced by Swift to Lord Treasurer Oxford, and had been established in his favor by the assistance of Pope, he soon began to entertain ambitious views. The walk he chose to shine in was *popular preaching:* he had talents for it, and began to be distinguished in the mob places of Southwark and London, when the Queen's sudden death destroyed all his prospects. This fatal stroke broke his spirits; he took to drinking, became a sot, and soon finished his course."—See Spence's Anecdotes.]

Digitized by Google

bear no resemblance to those tawdry things which it has for some time been the fashion to admire; in writing which the poet sits down without any plan, and heaps up splendid images without any selection; where the reader grows dizzy with praise and admiration, and yet soon grows weary, he can scarcely tell why. Our poet, on the contrary, gives out his beauties with a more sparing hand; he is still carrying his reader forward, and just gives him refreshment sufficient to support him to his journey's end. At the end of his course, the reader regrets that his way has been so short; he wonders that it gave him so little trouble, and so resolves to go the journey over again.

His poetical language is not less correct than his subjects are pleasing. He found it at that period in which it was brought to its highest pitch of refinement; and ever since his time it has been gradually debasing. It is indeed amazing, after what has been done by Dryden, Addison, and Pope, to improve and harmonize our native tongue, that their successors should have taken so much pains to involve it into pristine barbarity. These misguided innovators have not been content with restoring antiquated words and phrases, but have indulged themselves in the most licentious transpositions and the harshest constructions, vainly imagining, that the more their writings are unlike prose, the more they resemble poetry: they have adopted a language of their own, and call upon mankind for admiration. All those who do not understand them are silent, and those who make out their meaning are willing to praise, to show they understand. From these follies and affectations the poems of Parnell are entirely free: he has considered the language of poetry as the language of life, and conveys the warmest thoughts in the simplest expression.

Parnell has written several poems beside those published by Pope; and some of them have been made public with very little

Digitized by Google

credit to his reputation. There are still many more that have not yet seen the light, in the possession of Sir John Parnell, his nephew; who, from that laudable zeal which he has for his uncle's reputation, will probably be slow in publishing what he may even suspect will do it injury. Of those which are usually inserted in his works, some are indifferent, and some moderately good, but the greater part are excellent. A slight stricture on the most striking shall conclude this account, which I have already drawn out to a disproportionate length.

"Hesiod, or the Rise of Woman," is a very fine illustration of a hint from Hesiod. It was one of his earliest productions, and first appeared in a miscellany published by Tonson. Of the three songs that follow, two of them were written upon the lady he afterwards married: they were the genuine dictates of his passion, but are not excellent in their kind.

The Anacreontic, beginning with, "When Spring came on with fresh delight," is taken from a French poet whose name I forget, and, as far as I am able to judge of the French language, is better than the original. The Anacreontic that follows, "Gay Bacchus," &c., is also a translation of a Latin poem, by Aurelius Augurellus, an Italian poet, beginning with,

"Invitat olim Bacchus ad cænam suos
Comum, Jocum, Cupidinem."

Parnell, when he translated it, applied the characters to some of his friends; and as it was written for their entertainment, it probably gave them more pleasure than it has given the public in the perusal. It seems to have more spirit than the original; but it is extraordinary that it was published as an original and not as a translation. Pope should have acknowledged it, as he knew. The "Fairy Tale" is incontestably one of the finest pieces in

Digitized by Google

any language. The old dialect is not perfectly well preserved; but this is a very slight defect, where all the rest is so excellent.

The "Pervigilium Veneris" (which, by the bye, does not belong to Catullus) is very well versified; and in general all Parnell's translations are excellent. The "Battle of the Frogs and Mice," which follows, is done as well as the subject would admit; but there is a defect in the translation, which sinks it below the original, and which it was impossible to remedy,—I mean the names of the combatants, which in the Greek bear a ridiculous allusion to their natures, have no force to the English reader.* A bacon-eater was a good name for a mouse, and Pternotractas in Greek was a very good sounding word, that conveyed that meaning. Puff-cheek would sound odiously as a name for a frog, and yet Physignathos does admirably well in the original.

The "Letter to Mr. Pope" is one of the finest compliments that ever was paid to any poet; the description of his situation at the end of it is very fine, but far from being true. That part of it where he deplores his being far from wit and learning, as being far from Pope, gave particular offence to his friends at home. Mr. Coote, a gentleman in his neighborhood, who thought that he himself had wit, was very much displeased with Parnell for casting his eyes so far off for a learned friend, when he could so conveniently be supplied at home.

The translation of a part of the Rape of the Lock into monkish verse, serves to show what a master Parnell was of the Latin; a copy of verses made in this manner, is one of the most difficult trifles that can possibly be imagined. I am assured that it was written upon the following occasion. Before the Rape of the Lock was yet completed, Pope was reading it to his friend Swift, who sat very attentively, while Parnell, who happened to be in the

* ["Goldsmith has very properly remarked, that in this poem, the Greek names have not in English their original effect."—JOHNSON.]

Digitized by Google

house, went in and out without seeming to take any notice. However, he was very diligently employed in listening, and was able, from the strength of his memory, to bring away the whole description of the Toilet pretty exactly. This he versified in the manner now published in his works; and the next day, when Pope was reading his poem to some friends, Parnell insisted that he had stolen that part of the description from an old monkish manuscript. An old paper with the Latin verses was soon brought forth, and it was not till after some time that Pope was delivered from the confusion which it at first produced.*

The "Book-worm" is another unacknowledged translation, from a Latin poem by Beza. It was the fashion with the wits of the last age to conceal the places whence they took their hints or their subjects. A trifling acknowledgment would have made that lawful prize, which may now be considered as plunder.

The "Night Piece on Death" deserves every praise, and I should suppose, with very little amendment, might be made to surpass all those night pieces and church-yard scenes† that have since appeared. But the poem of Parnell's best known, and on which his best reputation is grounded, is the "Hermit." Pope, speaking of this in those manuscript anecdotes already quoted, says that "the poem is very good. The story," continues he, "was written originally in Spanish, whence probably Howel had translated it into prose, and inserted it in one of his letters. Addison liked the scheme, and was not disinclined to come into

* ["Mr. Harte told me that Dryden had been imposed on by a similar little stratagem. One of his friends translated into Latin verse, printed, and pasted on the bottom of an old hat-box, that celebrated passage, 'To die is landing on some silent shore, &c,' and that Dryden, on opening the box, was alarmed and amazed."—WARTON.]

† [The Night Piece is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's Church-Yard; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage of dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment.—JOHNSON.]

Digitized by Google

it." However this may be, Dr. Henry More, in his Dialogues, has the very same story;* and I have been informed by some, that it is originally of Arabian invention.

With respect to the prose works of Parnell, I have mentioned them already; his fame is too well grounded for any defects in them to shake it. I will only add, that the Life of Zoilus was written at the request of his friends, and designed as a satire upon Dennis and Theobald, with whom his Club had long been at variance. I shall end this account with a letter to him from Pope and Gay, in which they endeavor to hasten him to finish that production.

"London, March 18.

"DEAR SIR:—I must own I have long owed you a letter, but you must own you have owed me one a good deal longer. Besides, I have but two people in the whole kingdom of Ireland to take care of; the Dean and you: but you have several, who complain of your neglect in England. Mr. Gay complains, Mr. Harcourt complains, Mr. Jervas complains, Dr. Arbuthnot complains, my Lord complains, I complain. (Take notice of this figure of iteration, when you make your next sermon.) Some say you are in deep discontent at the new turn of affairs; others, that you are so much in the archbishop's good graces, that you will not correspond with any that have seen the last ministry. Some affirm that you have quarrelled with Pope (whose friends they observe daily fall from him, on account of his satirical and comical disposition); others, that you are insinuating yourself into the opinion of the ingenious 'Mr. What-do-ye-call-him.' Some think you are preparing your Sermons for the press, and others, that you will transform them into essays and moral discourses. But the only excuse that I will allow, is your attention to the Life of Zoilus. The Frogs already seem to croak for their transportation to England, and are sensible how much that doctor is cursed and hated, who introduced their species into your nation; therefore, as you dread the wrath of St. Patrick, send them hither, and rid the kingdom of those pernicious and loquacious animals.

"I have at length received your poem out of Mr. Addison's hands, which

* ["Parnell seems to have copied it chiefly from this platonic theologist, who had not less imagination than learning. Voltaire has inserted it in his Zadig, without mentioning whence he borrowed it."—WARTON.]

Digitized by Google

shall be sent as soon as you order it, and in what manner you shall appoint. I shall in the mean time give Mr. Tooke a packet for you, consisting of divers merry pieces. Mr. Gay's new farce, Mr. Burnet's Letter to Mr. Pope, Mr. Pope's Temple of Fame, Mr. Thomas Burnet's Grumbler on Mr. Gay, and the Bishop of Ailsbury's Elegy, written either by Mr. Cary or some other hand.

"Mr. Pope is reading a letter; and in the mean time, I make use of the pen to testify my uneasiness in not hearing from you. I find success, even in the most trivial things, raises the indignation of Scribblers: for I, for my 'What-d'-ye-call-it,' could neither escape the fury of Mr. Burnet, or the German Doctor; then where will rage end, when Homer is to be translated? Let Zoilus hasten to your friend's assistance, and envious criticism shall be no more. I am in hopes that we may order our affairs so as to meet this summer at the Bath: for Mr. Pope and myself have thoughts of taking a trip thither. You shall preach, and we will write lampoons; for it is esteemed as great an honor to leave the Bath for fear of a broken head, as for a Terræ Filius of Oxford to be expelled. I have no place at court; therefore, that I may not entirely be without one every where, show that I have a place in your remembrance. Yours, &c.

"A. Pope, and J. Gay.

"Homer will be published in three weeks."

I cannot finish this trifle without returning my sincerest acknowledgments to Sir John Parnell, for the generous assistance he was pleased to give me, in furnishing me with many materials, when he heard I was about writing the life of his uncle; as also to Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, relations of our poet; and to my very good friend M. Stevens, who, being an ornament to letters himself, is very ready to assist all the attempts of others.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIFE

OF

HENRY ST. JOHN,

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

[*First published in the year* 1770. See LIFE, ch. XX.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIFE

OF

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

There are some characters that seem formed by nature to take delight in struggling with opposition, and whose most agreeable hours are passed in storms of their own creating. The subject of the present sketch was, perhaps, of all others, the most indefatigable in raising himself enemies, to show his power in subduing them; and was not less employed in improving his superior talents than in finding objects on which to exercise their activity. His life was spent in a continual conflict of politics; and, as if that was too short for the combat, he has left his memory as a subject of lasting contention.

It is, indeed, no easy matter to preserve an acknowledged impartiality, in talking of a man so differently regarded on account of his political as well as his religious principles. Those whom his politics may please, will be sure to condemn him for his religion; and on the contrary, those most strongly attached to his theological opinions, are the most likely to decry his politics. On whatever side he is regarded, he is sure to have opposers; and this was perhaps what he most desired, having, from nature, a mind better pleased with the struggle than the victory.

Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, was born in the

Digitized by Google

year 1672, at Battersea, in Surry, at a seat that had been in the possession of his ancestors for ages before. His family was of the first rank, equally conspicuous for its antiquity, dignity and large possessions. It is found to trace its original as high as Adam de Port, Baron of Basing, in Hampshire, before the Conquest; and in a succession of ages, to have produced warriors, patriots, and statesmen, some of whom were conspicuous for their loyalty, and others for their defending the rights of the people. His grandfather, Sir Walter St. John, of Battersea, married one of the daughters of Lord Chief Justice St. John, who, as all know, was strongly attached to the republican party. Henry, the subject of the present Memoir, was brought up in his family, and consequently imbibed the first principles of his education among the Dissenters. At that time, Daniel Burgess, a fanatic of a very peculiar kind, being at once possessed of zeal and humor, and as well known for the archness of his conceits as the furious obstinacy of his principles, was confessor in the presbyterian way to his grandmother, and was appointed to direct our author's first studies. Nothing is so apt to disgust a feeling mind as mistaken zeal; and, perhaps, the absurdity of the first lectures he received might have given him that contempt for all religions, which he might justly have conceived against one. Indeed, no task can be more mortifying than what he was condemned to undergo: "I was obliged," says he, in one place, "while yet a boy, to read over the commentaries of Dr. Manton, whose pride it was to have made a hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm." Dr. Manton and his sermons were not likely to prevail much on one who was, perhaps, the most sharp-sighted in the world at discovering the absurdities of others, however he might have been guilty of establishing many of his own.

But these dreary institutions were of no very long conti-

Digitized by Google

nuance; as soon as it was fit to take him out of the hands of the women, he was sent to Eton School, and removed thence to Christ-church College, in Oxford. His genius and understanding were seen and admired in both these seminaries; but his love of pleasure had so much the ascendency, that he seemed contented rather with the consciousness of his own great powers than their exertion. However, his friends, and those who knew him most intimately, were thoroughly sensible of the extent of his mind; and when he left the university, he was considered as one who had the fairest opportunity of making a shining figure in active life.

Nature seemed not less kind to him in her external embellishments than in adorning his mind. With the graces of a handsome person, and a face in which dignity was happily blended with sweetness, he had a manner of address that was very engaging. His vivacity was always awake, his apprehension was quick, his wit refined, and his memory amazing; his subtlety in thinking and reasoning was profound; and all these talents were adorned with an elocution that was irresistible.

To the assemblage of so many gifts from nature, it was expected that art would soon give her finishing hand; and that a youth, begun in excellence, would soon arrive at perfection: but such is the perverseness of human nature, that an age which should have been employed in the acquisition of knowledge was dissipated in pleasure; and instead of aiming to excel in praiseworthy pursuits, Bolingbroke seemed more ambitious of being thought the greatest rake about town. This period might have been compared to that of fermentation in liquors, which grow muddy before they brighten; but it must also be confessed, that those liquors which never ferment are seldom clear. In this state of disorder, he was not without his lucid intervals; and even while he was noted for living with Miss Gumley, the most

Digitized by Google

expensive demirep in the kingdom, and bearing the greatest quantity of wine without intoxication, he even then despised his paltry ambition. "The love of study," says he, "and desire of knowledge, were what I felt all my life; and though my genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of those passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them I hearkened to him." These sacred admonitions were indeed very few; since his excesses are remembered to this very day. I have spoken to an old man, who assured me, that he saw him and one of his companions run naked through the Park in a fit of intoxication; but then it was a time when public decency might be transgressed with less danger than at present.

During this period all his attachments were to pleasure; so his studies only seemed to lean that way. His first attempts were in poetry, in which he discovers more wit than taste, more labor than harmony in his versification. We have a copy of his verses prefixed to Dryden's Virgil, complimenting the poet, and praising his translation. We have another, not so well known, prefixed to a French work, published in Holland by the Chevalier de St. Hyacinth, entitled, "Le Chef d'Œuvre d'un Inconnu." This performance is a humorous piece of criticism upon a miserable old ballad; and Bolingbroke's compliment, though written in English, is printed in Greek characters, so that at the first glance it may deceive the eye, and be mistaken for real Greek. There are two or three things more of his composition, which have appeared since his death, but which do honor neither to his parts nor memory.

In this mad career of pleasure he continued for some time; but at length, in 1700, when he arrived at the twenty-eighth year of his age, he began to dislike his method of living, and to find that sensual pleasure alone was not sufficient to make the happi-

Digitized by Google

ness of a reasonable creature. He therefore made his first effort to break from his state of infatuation, by marrying the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Henry Winchescomb, a descendant from the famous Jack of Newbury, who, though but a clothier in the reign of Henry VIII., was able to entertain the King and all his retinue in the most splendid manner. This lady was possessed of a fortune exceeding forty thousand pounds, and was not deficient in mental accomplishments; but whether he was not yet fully satiated with his former pleasures, or whether her temper was not conformable to his own, it is certain they were far from living happily together. After cohabiting for some time together, they parted by mutual consent, both equally displeased; he complaining of the obstinacy of her temper, she of the shamelessness of his infidelity. A great part of her fortune some time after, upon his attainder, was given her back; but, as her family estates were settled upon him, he enjoyed them after her death, upon the reversal of his attainder.

Having taken a resolution to quit the allurements of pleasure for the stronger attractions of ambition, soon after his marriage he procured a seat in the House of Commons, being elected for the borough of Wotton-Basset in Wiltshire, his father having served several times for the same place. Besides his natural endowments and his large fortune, he had other very considerable advantages that gave him weight in the senate, and seconded his views of preferment. His grandfather, Sir Walter St. John, was still alive; and that gentleman's interest was so great in his own county of Wilts, that he represented it in two Parliaments in a former reign. His father, also, was then the representative for the same; and the interest of his wife's family in the House was very extensive. Thus Bolingbroke took his seat with many accidental helps; but his chief and great resource lay in his own extensive abilities.

Digitized by Google

At that time the Whig and the Tory parties were strongly opposed in the House, and pretty nearly balanced. In the latter years of King William, the Tories, who from every motive were opposed to the court, had been gaining popularity, and now began to make a public stand against their competitors. Robert Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, a stanch and confirmed Tory, was, in the year 1700, chosen Speaker of the House of Commons, and was continued in the same upon the accession of Queen Anne, the year ensuing. Bolingbroke had all along been bred up, as was before observed, among the Dissenters; his friends leaned to that persuasion, and all his connections were in the Whig interest. However, either from principle, or from perceiving the Tory party to be gaining ground, while the Whigs were declining, he soon changed his connections, and joined himself to Harley, for whom then he had the greatest esteem; nor did he bring him his vote alone, but his opinion, which, even before the end of his first session, he rendered very considerable, the house perceiving even in so young a speaker the greatest eloquence, united with the profoundest discernment. The year following he was again chosen anew for the same borough, and persevered in his former attachments, by which he gained such an authority and influence in the House, that it was thought proper to reward his merit; and, on the 10th of April, 1704, he was appointed Secretary at War and of the Marine; his friend Harley having a little before been made Secretary of State.

The Tory party being thus established in power, it may easily be supposed that every method would be used to depress the Whig interest, and to prevent it from rising; yet so much justice was done even to merit in an enemy, that the Duke of Marlborough, who might be considered as at the head of the opposite party, was supplied with all the necessaries for carrying on the war in Flanders with vigor; and it is remarkable, that the greatest

Digitized by Google

events of his campaign, such as the battles of Blenheim and Ramillies, and several glorious attempts made by the duke to shorten the war by some decisive action, fell out while Bolingbroke was Secretary at War. In fact, he was a sincere admirer of that great general, and avowed it upon all occasions, to the last moment of his life: he knew his faults, he admired his virtues, and had the boast of being instrumental in giving lustre to those triumphs, by which his own power was in a manner overthrown.

As the affairs of the nation were then in as fluctuating a state as at present, Harley, after maintaining the lead for above three years, was in his turn obliged to submit to the Whigs, who once more became the prevailing party, and he was compelled to resign the seals. The friendship between him and Bolingbroke seemed at this time to have been sincere and disinterested; for the latter chose to follow his fortune, and the next day resigned his employments in the administration, following his friend's example, and setting an example at once of integrity and moderation.* As an instance of this, when his coadjutors, the Tories, were for carrying a violent measure in the House of Commons, in order to bring the Princess Sophia into England, Bolingbroke so artfully opposed it, that it dropped without a debate. For this his moderation was praised, but perhaps at the expense of his sagacity.

* [That his excesses were still undiminished, notwithstanding his three years' occupation in business, would appear from the following MS. anecdote written in a volume in the library of the Earl of Cawdor, by an ancestor of that nobleman:—"Soon after Lord Bolingbroke resigned the office of Secretary at War in 1707-8, he was telling some of his friends, over a bottle, that he would retire into the country, and lead there a philosophic life for the remainder of his days; on which it is said, Lord Lansdown made extempore the following lines:—

'From business and the noisy town retir'd,
Nor vex'd with love, nor with ambition fir'd,
Patient he'll wait till Charon bring his boat,
Still drinking like a fish and amorous as a goat.'"]

Digitized by Google

For some time the Whigs seemed to have gained a complete triumph, and upon the election of a new Parliament, in the year 1708, Bolingbroke was not returned. The interval which followed, of above two years, he employed in the severest study; and this recluse period he ever after used to consider as the most active and serviceable of his whole life. But his retirement was soon interrupted by the prevailing of his party once more: for the Whig parliament being dissolved in the year 1710, he was again chosen; and Harley being made Chancellor and Undertreasurer of the Exchequer, the important post of Secretary of State was given to our author, in which he discovered a degree of genius and assiduity, that perhaps have never been known to be united in one person to the same degree.

The English annals scarcely produce a more trying juncture, or one that required such various abilities to regulate. He was then placed in a sphere where he was obliged to conduct the machine of state, struggling with a thousand various calamities; a desperate enraged party, whose characteristic it has ever been to bear none in power but themselves; a war conducted by an able general, his professed opponent, and whose victories only tended to render him every day more formidable; a foreign enemy, possessed of endless resources, and seeming to gather strength from every defeat; an insidious alliance, that wanted only to gain the advantage of victory, without contributing to the expenses of the combat; a weak declining mistress, that was led by every report, and seemed ready to listen to whatever was said against him; still more, a gloomy, indolent, and suspicious colleague, that envied his power, and hated him for his abilities; these were a part of the difficulties that Bolingbroke had to struggle with in office, and under which he was to conduct the treaty of peace of Utrecht, which was considered as one of the most complicated negotiations that history can af-

Digitized by Google

ford. But nothing seemed too great for his abilities and industry: he set himself to the undertaking with spirit: he began to pave the way to the intended treaty, by making the people discontented at the continuance of the war. For this purpose he employed himself in drawing up accurate computations of the numbers of our own men, and that of foreigners, employed in its destructive progress: he even wrote in the Examiners, and other periodical papers of the times, showing how much of the burden rested upon England, and how little was sustained by those who falsely boasted their alliance.

By these means, and after much debate in the House of Commons, the Queen received a petition from Parliament, showing the hardships the allies had put upon England in carrying on this war, and consequently how necessary it was to apply relief to so ill-judged a connection. It may be easily supposed that the Dutch, against whom this petition was chiefly levelled, did all that was in their power to oppose it; many of the foreign courts also, with whom he had any transactions, were continually at work to defeat the minister's intentions. Memorial was delivered after memorial; the people of England, the Parliament, and all Europe, were made acquainted with the injustice and the dangers of such a proceeding: however, Bolingbroke went on with steadiness and resolution; and although the attacks of his enemies at home might have been deemed sufficient to employ his attention, yet he was obliged, at the same time that he furnished materials to the press in London, to furnish instructions to all our ministers and ambassadors abroad, who would do nothing but in pursuance of his directions. As an orator in the senate he exerted all his eloquence: he stated all the great points that were brought before the House: he answered the objections that were made by the leaders of the opposition; and all this with such success, that even his enemies, while they

Digitized by Google

opposed his power, acknowledged his abilities. Indeed, such were the difficulties he had to encounter, that we find him acknowledging himself, some years after, that he never looked back on this great event, past as it was, without a secret emotion of mind, when he compared the vastness of the undertaking, and the importance of the success, with the means employed to bring it about, and with those which were employed to frustrate his intentions.

While he was thus industriously employed, he was not without the rewards that deserved to follow such abilities, joined to so much assiduity. In July, 1712, he was created Baron St. John of Lidyard Tregoze in Wiltshire, and Viscount Bolingbroke; by the last of which titles he is now generally known, and is likely to be talked of by posterity: he was also the same year appointed Lord Lieutenant of the county of Essex. By the titles of Tregoze and Bolingbroke, he united the honors of the elder and younger branch of his family; and thus transmitted into one channel the opposing interest of two races, that had been distinguished, one for their loyalty to King Charles I., the other for their attachment to the Parliament that opposed him. It was afterwards his boast, that he steered clear of the extremes for which his ancestors had been distinguished; having kept the spirit of the one, and acknowledged the subordination that distinguished the other.

Bolingbroke, being thus raised very near the summit of power, began to perceive more clearly the defects of him who was placed there. He now began to find that Lord Oxford, whose party he had followed, and whose person he had esteemed, was by no means so able or so industrious as he supposed him to be. He now began from his heart to renounce the friendship which he once had for his coadjutor: he began to imagine him treacherous, mean, indolent, and invidious; he even began

Digitized by Google

to ascribe his own promotion to Oxford's hatred, and to suppose that he was sent up to the House of Lords only to render him contemptible. These suspicions were partly true, and partly suggested by Bolingbroke's own ambition: being sensible of his own superior importance and capacity, he could not bear to see another take the lead in public affairs, when he knew they owed their chief success to his own management. Whatever might have been his motives, whether of contempt, hatred, or ambition, it is certain an irreconcilable breach began between these two leaders of their party; their mutual hatred was so great, that even their own common interest, the vigor of their negotiations, and the safety of their friends, were entirely sacrificed to it. It was in vain that Swift, who was admitted into their counsels, urged the unreasonable impropriety of their disputes; that, while they were thus at variance within the walls, the enemy were making irreparable breaches without. Bolingbroke's antipathy was so great, that even success would have been hateful to him if Lord Oxford were to be a partner. He abhorred him to that degree, that he could not bear to be joined with him in any case; and even some time after, when the lives of both were aimed at, he could not think of concerting measures with him for their mutual safety, preferring even death itself to the appearance of a temporary friendship.

Nothing could have been more weak and injudicious than their mutual animosities at this juncture; and it may be asserted with truth, that men who were unable to suppress or conceal their resentments upon such a trying occasion, were unfit to take the lead in any measures, be their industry or their abilities ever so great. In fact, their dissensions were soon found to involve not only them, but their party in utter ruin: their hopes had for some time been declining; the Whigs were daily gaining

Digitized by Google

ground, and the Queen's death soon after totally destroyed all their schemes with their power.

Upon the accession of George I. to the throne, danger began to threaten the late ministry on every side; whether they had really intentions of bringing in the Pretender, or whether the Whigs made it a pretext for destroying them, is uncertain; but the King very soon began to show that they were to expect neither favor nor mercy at his hands. Upon his landing at Greenwich, when the court came to wait upon him, and Lord Oxford among the number, he studiously avoided taking any notice of him, and testified his resentment by the caresses he bestowed upon the members of the opposite faction. A regency had been some time before appointed to govern the kingdom, and Addison was made Secretary. Bolingbroke still maintained his place of State Secretary, but subject to the contempt of the great, and the insults of the mean. The first step taken by them to mortify him, was to order all letters and packets directed to the Secretary of State, to be sent to Mr. Addison; so that Bolingbroke was in fact removed from his office, that is, the execution of it, in two days after the Queen's death. But this was not the worst; for his mortifications were continually heightened by the daily humiliation of waiting at the door of the apartment where the regency sat, with a bag in his hand, and being all the time, as it were, exposed to the insolence of those who were tempted by their natural malevolence, or who expected to make their court to those in power by abusing him.

Upon this sudden turn of fortune, when the seals were taken from him, he went into the country; and having received a message from court to be present when the seal was taken from the door of the Secretary's office, he excused himself, alleging, that so trifling a ceremony might as well be performed by one of the under secretaries, but at the same time requested the honor of

Digitized by Google

kissing the King's hand, to whom he testified the utmost submission. This request, however, was rejected with disdain; the King had been taught to regard him as an enemy, and threw himself entirely on the Whigs for safety and protection.

The new Parliament, mostly composed of Whigs, met the 17th of March, and in the King's speech from the throne many inflaming hints were given, and many methods of violence chalked out to the two houses. "The first step," says Lord Bolingbroke, speaking on this occasion, "in both were perfectly answerable; and, to the shame of the peerage be it spoken, I saw at that time, several lords concur to condemn, in one general vote, all that they had approved in a former Parliament by many particular resolutions. Among several bloody resolutions proposed and agitated at this time, the resolution of impeaching me of high treason was taken, and I took that of leaving England, not in a panic terror, improved by the artifices of the Duke of Marlborough, whom I knew even at that time too well to act by his advice or information in any case, but on such grounds as the proceedings which soon followed sufficiently justified, and such as I have never repented building upon. Those who blamed it in the first heat, were soon after obliged to change their language: for what other resolution could I take? The method of prosecution designed against me would have put me out of a condition immediately to act for myself, or to serve those who were less exposed than me, but who were, however, in danger. On the other hand, how few were there on whose assistance I could depend, or to whom I would even in these circumstances be obliged? The ferment in the nation was wrought up to a considerable height; but there was at that time no reason to expect that it could influence the proceedings in Parliament, in favor of those who should be accused: left to its own movement, it was much more proper to quicken than slacken the prosecutions; and who was

Digitized by Google

there to guide its motions? The Tories, who had been true to one another to the last, were a handful, and no great vigor could be expected from them; the Whimsicals,* disappointed of the figure which they hoped to make, began indeed to join their old friends. One of the principal among them, namely, the Earl of Anglesea, was so very good as to confess to me, that if the court had called the servants of the late Queen to account, and stopped there, he must have considered himself as a judge, and acted according to his conscience on what should have appeared to him; but that war had been declared to the whole Tory party, and that now the state of things was altered. This discourse needed no commentary, and proved to me that I had never erred in the judgment I had made of this set of men. Could I then resolve to be obliged to them, or to suffer with Oxford? As much as I still was heated by the disputes, in which I had been all my life engaged against the Whigs, I would sooner have chosen to owe my security to their indulgence, than to the assistance of the Whimsicals; but I thought banishment, with all her train of evils, preferable to either."

Such was the miserable situation to which he was reduced on this occasion! Of all the number of his former flatterers and dependents, scarcely was one found remaining. Every hour brought fresh reports of his alarming situation, and the dangers which threatened him and his party on all sides. Prior, who had been employed in negotiating the treaty of Utrecht, was come over to Dover, and promised to reveal all he knew. The Duke of Marlborough planted his creatures round his lordship, who artfully endeavored to increase the danger; and an impeachment was actually

* ["*Whimsicals* were Tories who had been eager for the conclusion of the peace till the treaties were perfected; then they could come up to no direct approbation. In the clamor raised about the danger to the succession, they joined the Whigs."—*Letter to Wyndham.*]

Digitized by Google

preparing, in which he was accused of high treason. It argued therefore no degree of timidity in his lordship, to take the first opportunity to withdraw from danger, and to suffer the first boilings of popular animosity to quench the flame that had been raised against him. Accordingly, having made a gallant show of despising the machinations against him; having appeared in a very unconcerned manner at the play-house in Drury-lane, and having bespoke another play for the night ensuing; having subscribed to a new opera that was to be acted some time after, and talking of making an elaborate defence; he went off that same night in disguise to Dover, as a servant to Le Vigne, a messenger belonging to the French king; and there one William Morgan, who had been a captain in General Hill's regiment of marines, hired a vessel and carried him over to Calais, where the governor attended him in his coach, and carried him to his house with all possible distinction.

The news of Lord Bolingbroke's flight was soon known over the whole town; and the next day a letter from him to Lord Landsdowne was handed about in print, to the following effect:

"My Lord:

"I left the town so abruptly, that I had no time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me when you know that I had certain and repeated informations, from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken, by those who have power to execute it, to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance, nor could my innocence be any security, after it had once been demanded from abroad, and resolved on at home, that it was necessary to cut me off. Had there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial, after having been already prejudged unheard by the two houses of parliament, I should not have declined the strictest examination. I challenge the most inveterate of my enemies to produce any one instance of a criminal correspondence, or the least corruption of any part of the administration in which I was concerned. If my zeal for the honor and dignity of my royal mistress, and the true interest of my country, have any where transported me to let slip a warm or unguarded expression, I hope the most favorable interpretation will be put upon it. It is a comfort that will remain with me in all my misfortunes,

Digitized by Google

that I served her majesty faithfully and dutifully, in that especially which she had most at heart, relieving her people from a bloody and expensive war, and that I also have been too much an Englishman to sacrifice the interests of my country to any foreign ally; and it is for this crime only that I am now driven from thence. You shall hear more at large from me shortly.

Yours, &c."

No sooner was it universally known that he was retired to France, than his flight was construed into a proof of his guilt: and his enemies, accordingly, set about driving on his impeachment with redoubled alacrity. Mr., afterwards Sir Robert Walpole, who had suffered a good deal by his attachment to the Whig interest during the former reign, now undertook to bring in and conduct the charge against him in the House of Commons. His impeachment consisted of six articles which Walpole read to the House, in substance as follows:—"First, that whereas the Lord Bolingbroke had assured the Dutch ministers, that the Queen, his mistress, would make no peace but in concert with them, yet he had sent Mr. Prior to France that same year with proposals for a treaty of peace with that monarch, without the consent of the allies. Secondly, that he advised and promoted the making a separate treaty of convention with France, which was signed in September. Thirdly, that he disclosed to M. Mesnager, the French minister at London, this convention, which was the preliminary instructions to her Majesty's plenipotentiaries at Utrecht. Fourthly, that her Majesty's final instructions to her plenipotentiaries were disclosed by him to the Abbot Gualtier, who was an emissary of France. Fifthly, that he disclosed to the French the manner how Tournay in Flanders might be gained by them. And lastly, that he advised and promoted the yielding up Spain and the West-Indies to the Duke of Anjou, then an enemy to her Majesty." These were urged by Walpole with great vehemence, and aggravated with all the eloquence of which he was master. He challenged any person in behalf of the ac-

Digitized by Google

accused, and asserted, that to vindicate were in a manner to share his guilt. In this universal consternation of the Tory party, none was for some time seen to stir; but at length General Ross, who had received favors from his lordship, boldly stood up, and said, he wondered that no man more capable was found to appear in defence of the accused. However, in attempting to proceed, he hesitated so much that he was obliged to sit down, observing, that he would reserve what he had to say to another opportunity. It may easily be supposed, that the Whigs found no great difficulty in passing the vote for his impeachment through the House of Commons. It was brought into that House on the 10th of June, 1715, it was sent up to the House of Lords on the 6th of August ensuing, and in consequence of which he was attainted by them of high treason on the 13th of September. Nothing could be more unjust than such a sentence: but justice had been drowned in the spirit of party.

Bolingbroke, thus finding all hopes cut off at home, began to think of improving his wretched fortune upon the Continent. He had left England with a very small fortune, and his attainder totally cut off all resources for the future. In this depressed situation he began to listen to some proposals which were made by the Pretender, who was then residing at Barr, in France, and who was desirous of admitting Bolingbroke into his secret councils. A proposal of this nature had been made him shortly after his arrival at Paris, and before his attainder at home; but, while he had yet any hopes of succeeding in England, he absolutely refused, and made the best applications his ruined fortune would permit, to prevent the extremity of his prosecution.

He had for some time waited for an opportunity of determining himself, even after he found it vain to think of making his peace at home. He let his Jacobite friends in England know that they had but to command him, and he was ready to venture

Digitized by Google

in their service the little all that remained, as frankly as he had exposed all that was gone. "At length," says he, talking to himself, "these commands came, and were executed in the following manner. The person who was sent to me arrived in the beginning of July, 1715, at the place I had retired to in Dauphine. He spoke in the name of all his friends whose authority could influence me; and he brought word, that Scotland was not only ready to take arms, but under some sort of dissatisfaction to be withheld from beginning: that in England the people were exasperated against the government to such a degree, that, far from wanting to be encouraged, they could not be restrained from insulting it on every occasion; that the whole Tory party was become avowedly Jacobites; that many officers of the army, and the majority of the soldiers, were well affected to the cause; that the city of London was ready to rise, and that the enterprises for seizing of several places were ripe for execution; in a word, that most of the principal Tories were in concert with the Duke of Ormond: for I had pressed particularly to be informed whether his grace acted alone, or if not, who were his council; and that the others were so disposed, that there remained no doubt of their joining as soon as the first blow should be struck. He added, that my friends were a little surprised to observe that I lay neuter in such a conjuncture. He represented to me the danger I ran, of being prevented by people of all sides from having the merit of engaging early in this enterprise, and how unaccountable it would be for a man, impeached and attainted under the present government, to take no share in bringing about a revolution, so near at hand and so certain. He entreated that I would defer no longer to join the Chevalier, to advise and assist in carrying on his affairs, and to solicit and negotiate at the court of France, where my friends imagined that I should not fail to meet a favorable reception, and whence they made no doubt of receiving

Digitized by Google

assistance in a situation of affairs so critical, so unexpected, and so promising. He concluded by giving me a letter from the Pretender, whom he had seen in his way to me, in which I was pressed to repair without loss of time to Commercy; and this instance was grounded on the message which the bearer of the latter had brought me from England. In the progress of the conversation with the messenger, he related a number of facts, which satisfied me as to the general disposition of the people; but he gave me little satisfaction as to the measures taken to improve this disposition, for driving the business on with vigor, if it tended to a revolution, or for supporting it to advantage, if it spun into a war. When I questioned him concerning several persons whose disinclination to the government admitted no doubt, and whose names, quality, and experience were very essential to the success of the undertaking, he owned to me that they kept a great reserve, and did at most but encourage others to act, by general and dark expressions. I received this account and this summons ill in my bed; yet, important as the matter was, a few minutes served to determine me. The circumstances wanting to form a reasonable inducement to engage did not excuse me; but the smart of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein, and I looked on my party to be under oppression, and to call for my assistance. Besides which, I considered first that I should be certainly informed, when I conferred with the Chevalier, of many particulars unknown to this gentleman: for I did not imagine that the English could be so near to take up arms as he represented them to be, on no other foundation than that which he exposed."

In this manner, having for some time debated with himself, and taken his resolution, he lost no time in repairing to the Pretender at Commercy, and took the seals of that nominal king, as he had formerly those of his potent mistress. But this was a

Digitized by Google

terrible falling off indeed; and the very first conversation he had with this weak projector, gave him the most unfavorable expectations of future success. "He talked to me." says his lordship, "like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which; and when he entered into the particulars of his affairs, I found, that concerning the former he had nothing more circumstantial or positive to go upon, than what I have already related. But the Duke of Ormond had been for some time, I cannot say how long, engaged with the Chevalier: he had taken the direction of this whole affair, as far as it related to England, upon himself; and had received a commission for this purpose, which contained the most ample powers that could be given. But still, however, all was unsettled, undetermined, and ill understood. The duke had asked from France a small body of forces, a sum of money, and a quantity of ammunition: but to the first part of the request he received a flat denial; but was made to hope that some arms and some ammunition might be given. This was but a very gloomy prospect; yet hope swelled the depressed party so high, that they talked of nothing less than an instant and ready revolution. It was their interest to be secret and industrious; but, rendered sanguine by their passions, they made no doubt of subverting a government with which they were angry, and gave as great an alarm, as would have been imprudent at the eve of a general insurrection."

Such was the state of things when Bolingbroke arrived to take up his new office at Commercy; and although he saw the deplorable state of the party with which he was embarked, yet he resolved to give his affairs the best complexion he was able, and set out for Paris, in order to procure from that court the necessary succors for his new master's invasion of England. But his reception and negotiations

Digitized by Google

at Paris were still more unpromising than those at Commercy; and nothing but absolute infatuation seemed to dictate every measure taken by the party. He there found a multitude of people at work, and every one doing what seemed good in his own eyes; no subordination, no order, no concert. The Jacobites had wrought one another up to look upon the success of the present designs as infallible: every meeting-house which the populace demolished, as he himself says, every little drunken riot which happened, served to confirm them in these sanguine expectations; and there was hardly one among them, who would lose the air of contributing by his intrigues to the restoration, which he took for granted would be brought about in a few weeks. "Care and hope," says our author very humorously, "sat on every busy Irish face; those who could read and write had letters to show, and those who had not arrived to this pitch of erudition had their secrets to whisper. No sex was excluded from this ministry; Fanny Oglethorpe kept her corner in it; and Olive Trant, a woman of the same mixed reputation, was the great wheel of this political machine. The ridiculous correspondence was carried on with England by people of like importance, and who were busy in sounding the alarm in the ears of an enemy, whom it was their interest to surprise."

By these means, as he himself continues to inform us, the government of England was put on its guard; so that before he came to Paris, what was doing had been discovered. The little armament made at Havre de Grace, which furnished the only means to the Pretender of landing on the coasts of Britain, and which had exhausted the treasury of St. Germains, was talked of publicly. The Earl of Stair, the English minister at that city, very soon discovered its destination, and all the particulars of the intended invasion; the names of the persons from whom supplies came, and who were particularly active in the design,

Digitized by Google

were whispered about at tea-tables and coffee-houses. In short, what by the indiscretion of the projectors, what by the private interests and ambitious views of the French, the most private transactions came to light; and such of the more prudent plotters, who supposed that they had trusted their heads to the keeping of one or two friends, were in reality at the mercy of numbers. "Into such company," exlaims our noble writer, "was I fallen for my sins." Still, however, he went on, steering in the wide ocean without a compass, till the death of Louis XIV. and the arrival of the Duke of Ormond at Paris, rendered all his endeavours abortive: yet, notwithstanding these unfavorable circumstances, he still continued to dispatch several messages and directions for England, to which he received very evasive and ambiguous answers.

Among the number of these, he drew up a paper at Chaville, in concert with the Duke of Ormond, Marshal Berwick, and De Torcy, which was sent to England just before the death of the King of France, representing that France could not answer the demands of their memorial, and praying directions what to do. A reply to this came to him through the French Secretary of State, wherein they declared themselves unable to say any thing, till they saw what turn affairs would take on the death of the King, which had reached their ears. Upon another occasion a message coming from Scotland to press the Chevalier to hasten their rising, he dispatched a messenger to London to the Earl of Mar, to tell him that the concurrence of England in the insurrection was ardently wished and expected; but, instead of that nobleman's waiting for instructions, he had already gone into the Highlands, and there actually put himself at the head of his clans. After this, in concert with the Duke of Ormond, he dispatched one Mr. Hamilton, who got all the papers by heart, for fear of a miscarriage, to their friends in England, to inform

Digitized by Google

them, that though the Chevalier was destitute of succor, and all reasonable hopes of it, yet he would land as they pleased in England or Scotland at a minute's warning; and therefore they might rise immediately after they had sent dispatches to him. To this message Mr. Hamilton returned very soon with an answer given by Lord Lansdowne, in the name of all the persons privy to the secret, that since affairs grew daily worse, and would not mend by delay, the malcontents in England had resolved to declare immediately, and would be ready to join the Duke of Ormond on his landing; adding, that his person would be as safe in England as in Scotland, and that in every other respect it was better he should land in England; that they had used their utmost endeavors, and hoped the western counties would be in a good posture to receive him; and that he should land as near as possible to Plymouth. With these assurances the Duke embarked, though he had heard before of the seizure of many of his most zealous adherents, of the dispersion of many more, and the consternation of all; so that upon his arrival at Plymouth, finding nothing in readiness, he returned to Britany.

In these circumstances the Pretender himself sent to have a vessel got ready for him at Dunkirk, in which he went to Scotland, leaving Lord Bolingbroke all this while at Paris, to try if by any means some assistance might not be procured, without which all hopes of success were at an end. It was during this negotiation upon this miserable proceeding, that he was sent for by Mrs. Trant (a woman who had for some time before ingratiated herself with the Regent of France, by supplying him with mistresses from England), to a little house in the Bois de Boulogne, where she lived with Mademoiselle Chausery, an old superannuated waiting-woman belonging to the Regent. By these he was acquainted with the measures they had taken for the service of the Duke of Ormond; although Bolingbroke, who

Digitized by Google

was actual secretary to the negotiation, had never been admitted to a confidence in their secrets. He was therefore a little surprised at finding such mean agents employed without his privity, and very soon found them utterly unequal to the task. He quickly therefore withdrew himself from such wretched auxiliaries, and the Regent himself seemed pleased at his defection.

In the mean time, the Pretender set sail from Dunkirk for Scotland; and though Bolingbroke had all along perceived that his cause was hopeless, and his projects ill-designed; although he had met with nothing but opposition and disappointment in his service; yet he considered that this of all others was the time he could not be permitted to relax in the cause. He now therefore neglected no means, forgot no argument which his understanding could suggest, in applying to the court of France; but his success was not answerable to his industry. The King of France, not able to furnish the Pretender with money himself, had written some time before his death to his grandson, the King of Spain, and had obtained from him a promise of forty thousand crowns. A small part of this sum had been received by the Queen's treasurer at St. Germains, and had been sent to Scotland, or employed to defray the expenses which were daily making on the coast; at the same time Bolingbroke pressed the Spanish ambassador at Paris, and solicited the minister at the court of Spain. He took care to have a number of officers picked out of the Irish troops which served in France, gave them their routes, and sent a ship to receive and transport them to Scotland. Still, however, the money came in so slowly, and in such trifling sums, that it turned to little account, and the officers were on their way to the Pretender. At the same time he formed a design of engaging French privateers in the expedition, that were to have carried whatever should be necessary to send to any part of Britain in their first voyage, and then to cruise

Digitized by Google

under the Pretender's commission. He had actually agreed for some, and had it in his power to have made the same bargain with others: Sweden on the one side, and Scotland on the other, could have afforded them retreats; and if the war had been kept up in any part of the mountains, this armament would have been of the utmost advantage. But all his projects and negotiations failed by the Pretender's precipitate return, who was not above six weeks in his expedition, and flew out of Scotland even before all had been tried in his defence.

The expedition being in this manner totally defeated, Bolingbroke now began to think that it was his duty as well as interest to save the poor remains of the disappointed party. He never had any great opinion of the Pretender's success before he set off; but when this adventurer had taken the last step which it was in his power to make, our Secretary then resolved to suffer neither him nor the Scotch, to be any longer bubbles of their own credulity, and of the French court. In a conversation he had with the Marshal de Huxelles, he took occasion to declare that he would not be the instrument of amusing the Scotch; and since he was able to do them no other service, he would at least inform them of what little dependence they might place upon assistance from France. He added, that he would send them vessels, which, with those already on the coast of Scotland, might serve to bring off the Pretender, the Earl of Mar, and as many others as possible. The Marshal approved his resolution, and advised him to execute it, as the only thing which was left to do; but in the mean time the Pretender landed at Graveline, and gave orders to stop all vessels bound on his account to Scotland; and Bolingbroke saw him in the morning after his arrival at St. Germains, and he received him with open arms.

As it was the Secretary's business, as soon as Bolingbroke heard of his return, he went to acquaint the French court with it;

Digitized by Google

when it was recommended to him to advise the Pretender to proceed to Bar with all possible diligence; and in this measure Bolingbroke entirely concurred. But the Pretender himself was in no such haste: he had a mind to stay some time at St. Germains, and in the neighborhood of Paris, and to have a private meeting with the Regent; he accordingly sent Bolingbroke to solicit this meeting, who exerted all his influence in the negotiation. He wrote and spoke to the Marshal de Huxelles, who answered him by word of mouth and by letters, refusing him by both, and assuring him that the Regent said the things which were asked were puerilities, and swore he would not see him. The Secretary, no ways displeased with his ill success, returned with this answer to his master; who acquiesced in this determination, and declared he would instantly set out for Lorrain, at the same time assuring Bolingbroke of his firm reliance on his integrity.

However, the Pretender, instead of taking post for Lorrain, as he had promised, went to a little house in the Bois de Boulogne, where his female ministers resided, and there continued for several days, seeing the Spanish and Swedish ministers, and even the Regent himself. It might have been in these interviews that he was set against his new Secretary, and taught to believe that he had been remiss in his duty and false to his trust. Be this as it will, a few days after the Duke of Ormond came to see Bolingbroke, and, having first prepared him for the surprise, put into his hands a note directed to the Duke, and a little scrap of paper directed to the Secretary: they were both in the Pretender's handwriting, and dated as if written by him on his way to Lorrain; but in this Bolingbroke was not to be deceived, who knew the place of his present residence. In one of these papers the Pretender declared that he had no further occasion for the Secretary's service; and the other was an order

Digitized by Google

to him to give up the papers in his office; all which, he observes, might have been contained in a letter-case of a moderate size. He gave the Duke the seals, and some papers which he could readily come at; but for some others, in which there were several insinuations, under the Pretender's own hand, reflecting upon the Duke himself, these he took care to convey by a safe hand, since it would have been very improper that the Duke should have seen them. As he thus gave up without scruple all the papers which remained in his hands, because he was determined never to make use of them, so he declares he took a secret pride in never asking for those of his own which were in the Pretender's hands; contenting himself with making the Duke understand how little need there was to get rid of a man in this manner, who only wanted an opportunity to get rid of the Pretender and his cause. In fact, if we survey the measures taken on the one side, and the abilities of the man on the other, it will not appear any way wonderful that he should be disgusted with a party who had neither principle to give a foundation to their hopes, union to advance them, nor abilities to put them in motion.

Bolingbroke, being thus dismissed from the Pretender's service, supposed that he had got rid of the trouble and the ignominy of so mean an employment at the same time; but he was mistaken: he was no sooner ejected from the office, than articles of impeachment were preferred against him, in the same manner as he had before been impeached in England, though not with such effectual injury to his person and fortune. The articles of this impeachment by the Pretender were branched out into seven heads, in which he was accused of treachery, incapacity, and neglect. The first was, that he was never to be found by those who came to him about business; and if by chance or stratagem they got hold of him, he affected being in a hurry, and by putting

Digitized by Google

them off to another time, still avoided giving them any answer. The second was, that the Earl of Mar complained by six different messengers at different times, before the Chevalier came from Dunkirk, of his being in want of arms and ammunition, and prayed a speedy relief; and though the things demanded were in my Lord's power, there was not so much as one pound of powder in any of the ships which by his Lordship's directions departed from France. Thirdly, the Pretender himself after his arrival sent General Hamilton to inform him, that his want of arms and ammunition was such, that he should be obliged to leave Scotland, unless he received speedy relief; yet Lord Bolingbroke amused Mr. Hamilton twelve days together, and did not introduce him to any of the French ministers, though he was referred to them for a particular account of affairs; or so much as communicated his letters to the Queen, or any body else. Fourthly, the Count de Castle Blanco had for several months at Havre a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, and did daily ask his Lordship's orders how to dispose of them, but never got any instructions. Fifthly, the Pretender's friends at the French court had for some time past no very good opinion of his Lordship's integrity, and a very bad one of his discretion. Sixthly, at a time when many merchants in France would have carried privately any quantity of arms and ammunition into Scotland, his Lordship desired a public order for the embarkation; which being a thing not to be granted, is said to have been done in order to urge a denial. Lastly, the Pretender wrote to his Lordship by every occasion after his arrival in Scotland; and though there were many opportunities of writing in return, yet from the time he landed there, to the day he left it, he never received any letter from his Lordship. Such were the articles, by a very extraordinary reverse of fortune, preferred against Lord Bolingbroke, in less than a year after similar articles were drawn up against

Digitized by Google

him by the opposite party at home. It is not easy to find out what he could have done thus to disoblige all sides; but he had learned by this time to make out happiness from the consciousness of his own designs, and to consider all the rest of mankind as uniting in a faction to oppress virtue.

But though it was mortifying to be thus rejected on both sides, yet he was not remiss in vindicating himself from all. Against these articles of impeachment, therefore, he drew up an elaborate answer, in which he vindicates himself with great plausibility. He had long, as he asserts, wished to leave the Pretender's service, but was entirely at a loss how to conduct himself in so difficult a resignation: "but at length," says he, "the Pretender and his council disposed of things better for me, than I could have done for myself. I had resolved, on his return from Scotland, to follow him till his residence should be fixed somewhere; after which, having served the Tories in this, which I looked upon as their last struggle for power, and having continued to act in the Pretender's affairs till the end of the term for which I embarked with him, I should have esteemed myself to be at liberty, and should, in the civilest manner I was able, have taken my leave of him. Had we parted thus, I should have remained in a very strange situation all the rest of my life; on one side he would have thought that he had a right on any future occasion to call me out of my retreat, the Tories would probably have thought the same thing; my resolution was taken to refuse them both, and I foresaw that both would condemn me: on the other side, the consideration of his having kept measures with me, joined to that of having once openly declared for him, would have created a point of honor, by which I should have been tied down, not only from ever engaging against him, but also from making my peace at home. The Pretender cut this Gordian knot asunder at one blow: he broke the links of that chain

Digitized by Google

which former engagements had fastened on me, and gave me a right to esteem myself as free from all obligations of keeping measures with him, as I should have continued if I had never engaged in his interest."

It is not to be supposed that one so very delicate to preserve his honor, would previously have basely betrayed his employer: a man conscious of acting so infamous a part, would have undertaken no defence, but let the accusations, which could not materially affect him, blow over, and wait for the calm that was to succeed in tranquillity. He appeals to all the ministers with whom he transacted business, for the integrity of his proceedings at that juncture: and had he been really guilty, when he opposed the ministry here after his return, they would not have failed to brand and detect his duplicity. The truth is, that he perhaps was the most disinterested minister at that time in the Pretender's court; as he had spent great sums of his own money in his service, and never would be obliged to him for a farthing; in which case he believes that he was single. His integrity is much less impeachable on this occasion than his ambition; for all the steps he took may be fairly ascribed to his displeasure at having the Duke of Ormond and the Earl of Mar treated more confidentially than himself. It was his aim always to be foremost in every administration, and he could not bear to act as a subaltern in so paltry a court as that of the Pretender's.

At all periods of his exile, he still looked towards home with secret regret; and had even taken every opportunity to apply to those in power, either to soften his prosecutions or lessen the number of his enemies at home. In accepting his office under the Pretender, he made it a condition to be at liberty to quit the post whenever he should think proper; and being now disgracefully dismissed, he turned his mind entirely towards making his peace in England, and employing all the unfortunate experience

Digitized by Google

he had acquired to undeceive his Tory friends, and to promote the union and quiet of his native country. It was not a little favorable to his hopes, that about this time, though unknown to him, the Earl of Stair, ambassador to the French court, had received full powers to treat with him whilst he was engaged with the Pretender, but yet had never made him any proposals, which might be considered as the grossest outrage. But when the breach with the Pretender was universally known, the Earl sent one M. Saludin, a gentleman of Geneva, to Lord Bolingbroke, to communicate to him his Majesty King George's favorable disposition to grant him a pardon, and his own earnest desire to serve him as far as he was able. This was an offer by much too advantageous for Bolingbroke in his wretched circumstances to refuse; he embraced it, as became him to do, with all possible sense of the King's goodness, and of the ambassador's friendship. They had frequent conferences shortly after upon the subject. The turn which the English ministry gave the matter, was to enter into a treaty to reverse his attainder, and to stipulate the conditions on which this act of grace should be granted him; but this method of negotiation he would by no means submit to; the notion of a treaty shocked him, and he resolved never to be restored, rather than go that way to work. Accordingly, he opened himself without any reserve to Lord Stair, and told him, that he looked upon himself obliged in honor and conscience to undeceive his friends in England, both as to the state of foreign affairs, as to the management of the Jacobite interest abroad, and as to the character of the persons; in every one of which points he knew them to be most grossly and most dangerously deluded. He observed, that the treatment he had received from the Pretender and his adherents, would justify him to the world in doing this; that, if he remained in exile all his life, he might be assured that he would never have more to do with the Jacobite cause; and

Digitized by Google

that, if he were restored, he would give it an effectual blow, in making that apology which the Pretender had put him under the necessity of making; that in doing this, he flattered himself that he should contribute something towards the establishment of the King's government, and to the union of his subjects. He added, that if the court thought him sincere in those professions, a treaty with him was unnecessary; and, if they did not believe so, then a treaty would be dangerous to him. The Earl of Stair, who has also confirmed this account of Lord Bolingbroke's, in a letter to Mr. Craggs, readily came into his sentiments on this head, and soon after the King approved it upon their representations; he accordingly received a promise of pardon from George I., who, on the 2d of July, 1716, created his father Baron of Battersea, in the county of Surrey, and Viscount St. John. This seemed preparatory to his own restoration; and, instead of prosecuting any further ambitious schemes against the government, he rather began to turn his mind to philosophy; and since he could not gratify his ambition to its full extent, he endeavored to learn the art of despising it. The variety of distressful events that had hitherto attended all his struggles, at last had thrown him into a state of reflection, and this produced, by way of relief, a *consolatio philosophica*, which he wrote the same year, under the title of "Reflections upon Exile." In this piece, in which he professes to imitate the manner of Seneca, he with some wit draws his own picture, and represents himself as suffering persecution, for having served his country with abilities and integrity. A state of exile thus incurred, he very justly shows to be rather honorable than distressful; and indeed there are few men who will deny, that the company of strangers to virtue is better than the company of enemies to it. Besides this philosophical tract, he also wrote this year several Letters, in answer to the charges laid upon him by the Pretender and his adherents; and the following

Digitized by Google

year he drew up a vindication of his whole conduct with respect to the Tories, in the form of a Letter to Sir William Windham.

Nor was he so entirely devoted to the fatigues of business, but that he gave pleasure a share in its pursuits. He had never much agreed with the lady he first married, and after a short cohabitation they separated, and lived ever after asunder. She therefore remained in England upon his going into exile, and by proper application to the throne, was allowed a sufficient maintenance to support her with becoming dignity: however, she did not long survive his first disgrace; and upon his becoming a widower, he began to think of trying his fortune once more in a state which was at first so unfavorable. For this purpose he cast his eye on the widow of the Marquis of Villette, a niece to the famous Madame Maintenon; a young lady of great merit and understanding, possessed of a very large fortune, but encumbered with a long and troublesome lawsuit. In the company of this very sensible woman he passed his time in France, sometimes in the country, and sometimes at the capital, till the year 1723; in which, after the breaking up of the Parliament, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pardon as to his personal safety, but as yet neither restoring him to his family inheritance, his title, nor a seat in Parliament.

To obtain this favor had been the governing principle of his politics for some years before; and upon the first notice of his good fortune, he prepared to return to his native country, where, however, his dearest connections were either dead, or declared themselves suspicious of his former conduct in support of their party. It is observable that Bishop Atterbury, who was banished at this time for a supposed treasonable correspondence in favor of the Tories, was set on shore at Calais, just when Lord Bolingbroke arrived there on his return to England. So extraordinary a reverse of fortune could not fail of strongly affecting that good

Digitized by Google

prelate, who observed with some emotion, that he perceived himself to be exchanged: he presently left it to his auditors to imagine, whether his country were the loser or the gainer by such an exchange.

Lord Bolingbroke, upon his return to his native country, began to make very vigorous applications for further favors from the Crown. His pardon, without the means of support, was but an empty, or perhaps it might be called a distressful act of kindness, as it brought him back among his former friends in a state of inferiority his pride could not endure. However, his applications were soon after successful; for in about two years after his return he obtained an act of parliament to restore him to his family inheritance, which amounted to nearly three thousand pounds a year. He was also enabled by the same to possess any purchase he should make of any other estate in the kingdom; and he accordingly pitched upon a seat of Lord Tankerville's, at Dawley, near Uxbridge in Middlesex, where he settled with his lady, and laid himself out to enjoy the rural pleasures in perfection, since the more glorious ones of ambition were denied him. With this resolution he began to improve his new purchase in a very peculiar style, giving it all the air of a country farm, and adorning even his hall with implements of husbandry. We have a sketch of his way of living in this retreat in a letter of Pope's to Swift, who omits no opportunity of representing his lordship in the most amiable points of view. This letter is dated from Dawley, the country farm above-mentioned, and begins thus:—

"I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two hay-cocks; but his attention is somewhat diverted, by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in the admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower. He is pleased with your placing him in the triumvirate between yourself and me; though he says he doubts he shall fare like Lepidus, while one of us runs away with all the power, like Augustus, and another with all the pleasure, like Antony. It is upon a foresight of this, that he has fitted

Digitized by Google

up his farm, and you will agree that this scheme of retreat is not founded upon weak appearances. Upon his return from Bath, he finds all peccant humors are purged out of him; and his great temperance and economy are so signal, that the first is fit for my constitution, and the latter would enable you to lay up so much money as to buy a bishopric in England. As to the return of his health and vigor, were you here, you might inquire of his hay-makers; but as to his temperance, I can answer that for one whole day we have had nothing for dinner but mutton broth, beans and bacon, and a barn-door fowl. Now his lordship is run after his cart, I have a moment left to myself to tell you, that I overheard him yesterday agree with a painter for two hundred pounds, to paint his country hall, with rakes, spades, prongs, &c. and other ornaments, merely to countenance his calling this place a farm."

What Pope here says of his engagements with a painter, was shortly after executed: the hall was painted accordingly in black crayons only, so that at first view it brought to mind the figures often seen scratched with charcoal, or the smoke of a candle, upon the kitchen walls of farm houses. The whole, however, produced a most striking effect; and over the door at the entrance into it was this motto: *Satis beatus ruris honoribus.* His lordship seemed to be extremely happy in this pursuit of moral tranquillity, and in the exultation of his heart could not fail of communicating his satisfaction to his friend Swift. "I am in my own farm," says he, "and here I shoot strong and tenacious roots: I have caught hold of the earth, to use a gardener's phrase, and neither my enemies nor my friends will find it an easy matter to transplant me again."

There is not, perhaps, a stronger instance in the world than his lordship, that an ambitious mind can never be fairly subdued, but will still seek for those gratifications which retirement can never supply. All this time he was mistaken in his passion for solitude, and supposed that to be the child of philosophy which was only the effect of spleen: it was in vain that he attempted to take root in the shade of obscurity; he was originally bred in the glare of public occupation, and he secretly once more wished

Digitized by Google

for transplantation. He was only a titular lord; he had not been thoroughly restored; and, as he was excluded from a seat in the House of Peers, he burned with impatience to play a part in that conspicuous theatre. Impelled by this desire, he could no longer be restrained in obscurity, but once more entered into the bustle of public business; and disavowing all obligations to the minister, he embarked in the opposition against him, in which he had several powerful coadjutors: but previously he had taken care to prefer a petition to the House of Commons, desiring to be reinstated in his former emoluments and capacities. This petition at first occasioned very warm debates: Walpole, who pretended to espouse his cause, alleged that it was very right to admit him to his inheritance; and when Lord William Pawlet moved for a clause to disqualify him from sitting in either house, Walpole rejected the motion, secretly satisfied with a resolution which had been settled in the cabinet, that he should never more be admitted into any share of power. To this artful method of evading his pretensions, Bolingbroke was no stranger; and he was now resolved to shake that power, which thus endeavored to obstruct the increase of his own: taking, therefore, his part in the opposition with Pulteney, while the latter engaged to manage the House of Commons, Bolingbroke undertook to enlighten the people.

Accordingly, he soon distinguished himself by a multitude of pieces, written during the latter part of George the First's reign, and likewise the beginning of that which succeeded. These were conceived with great vigor and boldness; and now, once more engaged in the service of his country, though disarmed, gagged, and almost bound, as he declared himself to be, yet he resolved not to abandon his cause, as long as he could depend on the firmness and integrity of those coadjutors, who did not labor under the same disadvantages with himself. His letters

Digitized by Google

in a paper called the Craftsman, were particularly distinguished in this political contest; and though several of the most expert politicians of the times joined in this paper, his essays were peculiarly relished by the public. However, it is the fate of things written for an occasion, seldom to survive that occasion. The Craftsman, though written with great spirit and sharpness, is now almost forgotten, although, when it was published as a weekly paper, it sold much more rapidly than even the Spectator. Beside this work he published several other separate pamphlets, which were afterwards reprinted in the second edition of his works, and which were very popular in their day. This political warfare continued for ten years, during which time he labored with great strength and perseverance, and drew up such a system of politics, as some have supposed to be the most complete now existing. But, as upon all other occasions, he had the mortification once more to see those friends desert him, upon whose assistance he most firmly relied, and all that web of fine-spun speculation actually destroyed at once, by the ignorance of some and the perfidy of others. He then declared, that he was perfectly cured of his patriotic frenzy; he fell out not only with Pulteney for his selfish views, but with his old friends the Tories, for abandoning their cause as desperate; averring, that the faint and unsteady exercise of parts on one side, was a crime but one degree inferior to the iniquitous misapplication of them on the other. But he could not take leave of a controversy in which he had been so many years engaged, without giving a parting blow, in which he seemed to summon up all his vigor at once; and where, as the poet says, "*Animam in vulnere posuit.*" This inimitable piece is entitled, "A Dissertation on Parties," and of all his masterly pieces it is in general esteemed the best.

Having finished this, which was received with the utmost

Digitized by Google

avidity, he resolved to take leave, not only of his enemies and friends, but even of his country; and in this resolution, in the year 1736, he once more retired to France, where he looked to his native country with a mixture of anger and pity, and upon his former professing friends with a share of contempt and indignation. "I expect little," says he, "from the principal actors that tread the stage at present. They are divided, not so much as it seemed, and as they would have it believed, about measures: the true division is about their different ends. Whilst the minister was not hard pushed, nor the prospect of succeeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The destruction of the minister was pursued only as a preliminary, but of essential and indisputable necessity, to that end; but when his destruction seemed to approach, the object of his succession interposed to the sight of many, and the reformation of the government was no longer their point of view. They had divided the skin, at least in their thought, before they had taken the beast. The common fear of hastening his downfall for others, made them all faint in the chase. It was this, and this alone that saved him, and put off his evil day."

Such were his cooler reflections, after he had laid down his political pen, to employ it in a manner that was much more agreeable to his usual professions, and his approaching age. He had long employed the few hours he could spare, on subjects of a more general and important nature to the interests of mankind; but as he was frequently interrupted by the alarms of party, he made no great proficiency in his design. Still, however, he kept it in view, and he makes frequent mention in his letters to Swift, of his intentions to give metaphysics a new and useful turn. "I know," says he, in one of these, "how little regard you pay to writings of this kind; but I imagine, that if you can like any, it

Digitized by Google

must be those that strip metaphysics of all their bombast, keep within the sight of every well-constituted eye, and never bewilder themselves, whilst they pretend to guide the reason of others."

Having now arrived at the sixtieth year of his age, and being blessed with a very competent share of fortune, he returned into France, far from the noise and hurry of party; for his seat at Dawley was too near to devote the rest of his life to retirement and study. Upon his going to that country, as it was generally known that disdain, vexation, and disappointment had driven him there, many of his friends as well as his enemies supposed, that he was once again gone over to the Pretender. Among the number who entertained this suspicion was Swift, whom Pope, in one of his letters, very roundly chides for harboring such an unjust opinion. "You should be cautious," says he, "of censuring any motion or action of Lord Bolingbroke, because you hear it only from a shallow, envious, and malicious reporter. What you writ to me about him, I find, to my great scandal, repeated in one of yours to another. Whatever you might hint to me, was this for the profane? The thing, if true, should be concealed; but it is, I assure you, absolutely untrue in every circumstance. He has fixed in a very agreeable retirement near Fontainbleau, and makes it his whole business *vacare litteris*."

This reproof from Pope was not more friendly than it was true. Lord Bolingbroke was too well acquainted with the forlorn state of that party and the folly of its conductors, once more to embark in their desperate concerns. He now saw that he had gone as far towards reinstating himself in the full possession of his former honors, as the mere dint of parts and application could go, and was at length experimentally convinced, that the decree was absolutely irreversible, and the door of the House of Lords finally shut against him. He therefore, at Pope's suggestion, re-

Digitized by Google

tired merely to be at leisure from the broils of opposition, for the calmer pleasures of philosophy.* Thus the decline of his life, though less brilliant, became more amiable; and even his happiness was improved by age, which had rendered his passions more moderate, and his wishes more attainable.

But he was far from suffering, even in solitude, his hours to glide away in torpid inactivity. That active restless disposition still continued to actuate his pursuits; and having lost the season for gaining power over his contemporaries, he was now resolved upon acquiring fame from posterity. He had not been long in his retreat near Fontainbleau, when he began a course of Letters on the Study and Use of History, for the use of a young nobleman.† In these he does not follow the methods of St. Real and others who have treated on this subject, who make history the great fountain of all knowledge; he very wisely confines its benefits, and supposes them rather to consist in deducting general maxims from particular facts, than in illustrating maxims by the application of historical passages. In mentioning ecclesiastical history, he gives his opinion very freely upon the subject of the divine original of the sacred books, which he supposes to have no such foundation. This new system of thinking, which he had always propagated in conversation, and which he now began to adopt in his more labored compositions, seemed no way supported by his acuteness or his learning. He began to reflect

* ["We have a decisive contradiction of this hypothesis from Bolingbroke himself; for we find him stating, in one of his letters to Lord Marchmont, which Goldsmith could not have known, dated 24th July, 1746, 'I did not leave England in 1735 till some schemes, which were then on the loom—though they never came into effect—made me one too many, even to my most intimate friends."—*Quart. Rev.* vol. liv. p. 388.]

† [Lord Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, only son of the last earl of Clarendon, He died unmarried, before his father, at Paris, 1754. His lordship applied to Mallet, who had the legacy of Bolingbroke's works, to suppress this tract; but he could not succeed in his object.]

Digitized by Google

seriously on these subjects too late in life, and to suppose those objections very new and unanswerable which had been already confuted by thousands. "Lord Bolingbroke," says Pope, in one of his letters, "is above trifling; when he writes of any thing in this world, he is more than mortal. If ever he trifles, it must be when he turns divine."

In the mean time, as it was evident that a man of his active ambition, in choosing retirement when no longer able to lead in public, must be liable to ridicule in resuming a resigned philosophical air, in order to obviate the censure, he addressed a Letter to Lord Bathurst upon the true use of retirement and study; in which he shows himself still able and willing to undertake the cause of his country, whenever its distresses should require his exertion. "I have," says he, "renounced neither my country nor my friends; and by friends I mean all those, and those alone, who are such to their country. In their prosperity they shall never hear of me; in their distress always. In that retreat wherein the remainder of my days shall be spent, I may be of some use to them, since even thence I may advise, exhort, and warn them." But upon this pursuit only, and having now exchanged the gay statesman for the grave philosopher, he shone forth with distinguished lustre. His conversation took a different turn from what had been usual with him; and, as we are assured by Lord Orrery, who knew him, it united the wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace.

Yet still amid his resolutions to turn himself from politics, and to give himself up entirely to the calls of philosophy, he could not resist embarking once more in the debates of his country; and coming back from France, settled at Battersea, an old seat which was his father's, and had been long in the possession of the family. He supposed he saw an impending calamity, and though it was not in his power to remove, he thought it his duty

Digitized by Google

to retard its fall. To redeem or save the nation from perdition, he thought impossible, since national corruptions were to be purged by national calamities; but he was resolved to lend his feeble assistance to stem the torrent that was pouring in. With this spirit he wrote that excellent piece, which is entitled, "The Idea of a Patriot King;" in which he describes a monarch uninfluenced by party, leaning to the suggestions neither of Whigs nor Tories, but equally the friend and the father of all. Some time after, in the year 1749, after the conclusion of the peace two years before, the measures taken by the administration seemed not to have been repugnant to his notions of prudence for that juncture: in that year he wrote his last production, containing Reflections on the then state of the nation, principally with regard to her taxes and debts, and on the causes and consequences of them. This undertaking was left unfinished; for death snatched the pen from the hand of the writer.

Having passed the latter part of his life in dignity and splendor, his rational faculties improved by reflection, and his ambition kept under by disappointment, his whole aim seemed to have been to leave the stage of life, on which he had acted such various parts, with applause. He had long wished to fetch his last breath at Battersea, the place where he was born; and fortune, that had through life seemed to traverse all his aims, at last indulged him in this. He had long been troubled with a cancer in his cheek; by which excruciating disease he died on the verge of fourscoure years of age. He was consonant with himself to the last; and those principles which he had all along avowed, he confirmed with his dying breath, having given orders that none of the clergy should be permitted to trouble him in his latest moments. His body was interred in Battersea church with those of his ancestors; and a marble monument erected to his memory with the following excellent inscription:

Digitized by Google

HERE LIES
HENRY ST. JOHN,
IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE
SECRETARY OF WAR, SECRETARY OF STATE,
AND VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE:
IN THE DAYS OF KING GEORGE I. AND
KING GEORGE II.
SOMETHING MORE AND BETTER.
HIS ATTACHMENT TO QUEEN ANNE
EXPOSED HIM TO A LONG AND SEVERE PERSECUTION;
HE BORE IT WITH FIRMNESS OF MIND;
HE PASSED THE LATTER PART OF HIS TIME AT HOME,
THE ENEMY OF NO NATIONAL PARTY,
THE FRIEND OF NO FACTION;
DISTINGUISHED (UNDER THE CLOUD OF A PROSCRIPTION
WHICH HAD NOT BEEN ENTIRELY TAKEN OFF)
BY ZEAL TO MAINTAIN THE LIBERTY
AND TO RESTORE THE ANCIENT PROSPERITY
OF GREAT BRITAIN.
HE DIED THE 12TH OF DECEMBER, 1751,
AGED 70.

In this manner lived and died Lord Bolingbroke, ever active, never depressed, ever pursuing fortune, and as constantly disappointed by her. In whatever light we view his character, we shall find him an object rather properer for our wonder than our imitation, more to be feared than esteemed, and gaining our admiration without our love. His ambition ever aimed at the summit of power, and nothing seemed capable of satisfying his immoderate desires, but the liberty of governing all things without a rival. With as much ambition, as great abilities, and more acquired knowledge than Cæsar, he wanted only his courage to be as successful; but the schemes his head dictated his heart often refused to execute; and he lost the ability to perform, just when the great occasion called for all his efforts to engage.

Digitized by Google

The same ambition that prompted him to be a politician, actuated him as a philosopher. His aims were equally great and extensive in both capacities; unwilling to submit to any in the one, or any authority in the other, he entered the fields of science with a thorough contempt of all that had been established before him, and seemed willing to think every thing wrong, that he might show his faculty in the reformation. It might have been better for his quiet as a man, if he had been content to act a subordinate character in the state; and it had certainly been better for his memory as a writer, if he had aimed at doing less than he attempted. Wisdom in morals, like every other art or science, is an accumulation that numbers have contributed to increase; and it is not for one single man to pretend that he can add more to the heap than the thousands that have gone before him. Such innovations more frequently retard than promote knowledge; their maxims are more agreeable to the reader by having the gloss of novelty to recommend them, than those which are trite, only because they are true. Such men are therefore followed at first with avidity, nor is it till some time that their disciples begin to find their error. They often, though too late, perceive that they have been following a speculative inquiry, while they have been leaving a practical good; and while they have been practising the arts of doubting, they have been losing all firmness of principle, which might tend to establish the rectitude of their private conduct. As a moralist, therefore, Lord Bolingbroke, by having endeavored at too much, seems to have done nothing; but as a political writer, few can equal, and none can exceed him. As he was a practical politician, his writings are less filled with those speculative illusions, which are the result of solitude and seclusion. He wrote them with a certainty of their being opposed, sifted, examined, and reviled; he therefore took care to build them up of such mate-

Digitized by Google

rials as could not be easily overthrown: they prevailed at the times in which they were written, they still continue to the admiration of the present age, and will probably last for ever.

The following is a Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the late Right Hon. Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke:

"In the name of God, whom I humbly adore, to whom I offer up perpetual thanksgiving, and to the order of whose providence I am cheerfully resigned: this is the Last Will and Testament of me, Henry St. John, in the reign of Queen Anne, and by her grace and favor, Viscount Bolingbroke. After more than thirty years' proscription, and after the immense losses I have sustained by unexpected events in the course of it; by the injustice and treachery of persons nearest to me; by the negligence of friends, and by the infidelity of servants: as my fortune is so reduced at this time, that it is impossible for me to make such disposition, and to give such ample legacies as I always intended, I content therefore to give as follows:

"My debts, and the expenses of my burial in a decent and private manner at Battersea, in the vault where my last wife lies, being first paid, I give to William Chetwynd of Stafford, Esq., and Joseph Taylor of the Inner-Temple, London, Esq., my two assured friends, each of them one hundred guineas, to be laid out by them as to each of them shall seem best, in some memorial, as the legacy of their departed friend; and I constitute them executors of this my will. The diamond ring which I wear upon my finger, I give to my old and long-approved friend the Marquis of Matignon, and, after his decease, to his son the Count de Gace, that I may be kept in the remembrance of a family whom I love and honor above all others.

"*Item*, I give to my said executors the sum of four hundred pounds in trust, to place out the same in some of the public funds, or government securities, or any other securities, as they shall think proper, and to pay the interest or income thereof to Francis Arboneau, my valet-de-chambre, and Ann, his wife, and the survivor of them; and after the decease of the survivor of them, if their son John Arboneau shall be living, and under the age of eighteen years, to pay the said interest or income to him, until he shall attain his said age, and then to pay the principal money, or assign the securities for the same to him; but if he shall not be living at the decease of his father and mother, or shall afterwards die before his said age of eighteen years, in either of the said cases the said principal sum of four hundred pounds, and the securities for the same, shall sink into my personal estate, and be accounted part thereof.

"*Item*, I give to my two servants, Marianne Tribon, and Remi Charnet,

Digitized by Google

commonly called Picard, each one hundred pounds; and to every other servant living with me at the time of my decease, and who shall have lived with me two years or longer, I give one year's wages more than what shall be due to them at my death.

"And whereas, I am the author of the several books or tracts following, *viz.*—'Remarks on the History of England, from the Minutes of Humphrey Oldcastle.' 'In twenty-four letters.' 'A Dissertation upon Parties. In nineteen letters to Caleb Danvers, Esq.' 'The Occasional Writer, Nos. 1, 2, 3.' 'The Vision of Camilick. 'An Answer to the London Journal of December 21, 1728, by John Trot.' 'An Answer to the Defence of the Inquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain.' 'A final Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication.'—All which books or tracts have been printed and published; and I am also the author of "Four Letters on History,' &c., which have been privately printed and not published; but I have not assigned to any person or persons whatsoever the copy, or the liberty of printing or reprinting any of the said books, or tracts, or letters: now I do hereby, as far as by law I can, give and assign to David Mallet, of Putney, in the county of Surrey, Esq, the copy and copies of all and each of the beforementioned books or tracts, and letters, and the liberty of reprinting the same. I also give to the said David Mallet the copy and copies of all the manuscript books, papers, and writings, which I have written or composed, or shall write or compose, and leave at the time of my decease. And I further give to the said David Mallet, all the books which, at the time of my decease, shall be in the room called my library.

"All the rest and residue of my personal estate, whatsoever and wheresoever, I give to my said executors; and hereby revoking all former wills, I declare this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the twenty-second day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty-one.

HENRY SAINT JOHN, BOLINGBROKE.

"Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said testator, as and for his last will and testament, in the presence of Oliver Price and Thomas Hall.

"Proved at London, the fifth day of March, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two, before the worshipful Robert Chapman, doctor of laws and surrogate, by the oaths of William Chetwynd and Joseph Taylor, Esquires, the executers named in the will, to whom administration was granted, being first sworn duly to administer. William Legard, Peter St. Eloy, Henry Stevens, deputy registers."

In Dr. Maty's Life of Lord Chesterfield, he mentions that he had seen Lord Bolingbroke for several months laboring under a cruel, and to appearance incurable disorder. A cancerous humor

Digitized by Google

in his face made a daily progress; and the empirical treatment he submitted to not only hastened his end, but also exposed him to the most excruciating pain. 'He saw him, for the last time, the day before his tortures began. Though the unhappy patient, as well as his friend, did then expect that he should recover, and accordingly desired him not to come again till his cure was completed, yet he still took leave of him in a manner which showed how much he was affected. He embraced the Earl with tenderness, and said, "God, who placed me here, will do what he pleases with me hereafter, and he knows best what to do. May he bless you." And in a letter from Chesterfield to a lady of rank at Paris, he says, "I frequently see our friend Bolingbroke, but I see him with great concern. A humor he has long had in his cheek proves to be cancerous, and has made an alarming progress of late. Hitherto it is not attended with pain, which is all he wishes for; as to the rest he is resigned. Truly, a mind like his, so far superior to the generality, would have well deserved that nature should have made an effort in his favor as to the body, and given him an uncommon share of health and duration."

The last scene is thus lamented, in a letter to the same lady: —"Are you not greatly shocked, but I am sure you are, at the dreadful death of our friend Bolingbroke? The remedy has hastened his death, against which there was no remedy, for his cancer was not topical but universal, and had so infected the whole mass of his blood, as to be incurable. What I most lament is, that the medicines put him to exquisite pain; an evil I dread much more than death, both for my friends and myself. I lose a warm, an amiable, and instructive friend. I saw him a fortnight before his death, when he depended upon a cure, and so did I; and he desired I would not come any more till he was quite well, which he expected would be in ten or twelve days. The next day the great pains came on, and never left him till

Digitized by Google

within two days of his death, during which he lay insensible. What a man! what extensive knowledge! what a memory! what eloquence! His passions, which were strong, were injurious to the delicacy of his sentiments; they were apt to be confounded together, and often wilfully. The world will do him more justice now than in his lifetime."

Digitized by Google

MISCELLANEOUS CRITICISM.

[*Now first collected.* See LIFE, ch. vi. and ch. viii.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MISCELLANEOUS CRITICISM.

I.—ON SMOLLETT'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

[*From the Monthly Review*, 1757. "*A Complete History of England, deduced from the Descent of Julius Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle*, 1748. *Containing the Transactions of one thousand eight hundred and three years. By T. Smollett, M.D.*" 4*to.* 4 *vols.*]

When the Historian relates events far removed from the age in which he writes, when evidence is become scarce, and authorities are rendered doubtful, from the obscurities which time has thrown upon them, he ought, above all things, to be careful that his narration be as amply authenticated as the nature of his researches will allow. Strictly speaking, the eye-witness alone should take upon him to transmit facts to posterity; and as for the Historians, the Copyists, the Annotators, who may follow him, if possessed of no new and genuine materials, instead of strengthening, they will only diminish the authority of their guide: for, in proportion as History removes from the first witnesses, it may recede also from truth; as, by passing through the prejudices, or the mistakes of subsequent compilers, it will be apt to imbibe what tincture they may choose to give it. The *later* historian's only way, therefore, to prevent the ill effects of that decrease of evidence which the lapse of years necessarily brings with it, must be, by punctually referring to the spring-head from

Digitized by Google

whence the stream of his narration flows; which at once will cut off all appearance of partiality, or misrepresentation. As in law, the rectitude of a person's character is not alone sufficient to establish the truth of a fact, so in history, not merely the writer's testimony, be our opinion of his veracity ever so great, but collateral evidence also is required, to determine every thing of a questionable nature. The fundamental materials for the general history of any country are the public records, ancient monuments, and original historians of that country; and in proportion as they are slighted by the compiler, these venerable originals themselves may fall into neglect, and possibly in the end, even into irretrievable oblivion:—and when *they* are gone, in vain may we look for an enlightening ray to guide us through the darkness of antiquity: we must then be content with the uncertain gleam with which an erroneous or partial leader is pleased to conduct us.

There were of old, and still are, indolent readers, who turn to an author with the design rather of killing than improving their time; and who, scared at the serious face of instruction, are rather attracted by the lively, florid style of a Florus, than the more substantial disquisitions of a Polybius. With such readers, every step an historian takes towards determining the weight of evidence, or the degrees of credibility, is an excursion into the regions of dulness; but while the writer proceeds in his narrative, without reflection, they continue to read without reflecting, and his history enlightens them just as much as romance would have done; for they are equally unconcerned about truth in either.

Truth should be the main object of the historian's pursuit; elegance is only its ornament; if, therefore, we see a writer of this class plume himself upon his excelling in the last, and at the same time slighting the evidences that ought to ascertain

Digitized by Google

and support the first, suspicion will naturally arise, and the author's credit will sink in proportion.

With respect to the History now before us, the compiler does not pretend to have discovered any hidden records, or authentic materials, that have escaped the notice of former writers; or to have thrown such lights upon contested events, or disputed characters, as may serve to rectify any mistaken opinions mankind may have entertained with respect to either. His care is rather to disburthen former histories of those tedious vouchers, and proofs of authenticity, which, in his opinion, only serves to swell the page, and exercise the reader's patience. He seldom quotes authorities in support of his representations; and if he now and then condescends to cite the testimony of former writers, he never points to the page, but leaves the skeptical reader to supply any defect of this kind, by an exertion of that industry which the author disdains; and thus on the veracity of the relater are we to rest our conviction, and accept his own word for it that he has no intention to deceive or mislead us.

That this author, however, has no such design, may be fairly presumed from his declining all attempts to bias by any remarks of his own. Determined to avoid all *useless disquisitions*, as his plan professes, he steers wide indeed of that danger, and avoids all disquisitions as useless. A brief recital of facts is chiefly what the public is to expect from this performance. But, with submission, we think the ingenious author might have afforded us something more. He has undoubted ability; and he well knows that a moderate interspersion of manly and sensible observations must have greatly enlivened his work, and would hardly have been deemed superfluous by such readers as have any turn for reflection.

With respect to the style of this historian, it is in general clear, nervous, and flowing; and we think it impossible for a

Digitized by Google

reader of taste not to be pleased with the perspicuity and elegance of his manner. But what he seems principally to value himself upon, and what his patronizers chiefly mention in praise of his performance, are the Characters he has summed up at the close of every reign. Here, however, we cannot fall in with the ingenious Doctor's admirers:—but we forbear to enlarge, and shall therefore proceed to enable our readers, in some measure, to judge for themselves, by a few specimens, taken from such parts of the History as, we apprehend, the author's friends will think we do him no injustice in selecting. The character of James the First is thus drawn by our historian.

"James was in his stature of the middle size, inclining to corpulency; his forehead was high, his beard scanty, and his aspect mean. His eyes, which were large and languid, he rolled about incessantly, as if in quest of novelties. His tongue was so large, that in speaking or drinking, he beslabbered the bystanders. His knees were so weak, as to bend under the weight of his body. His address was awkward, and his appearance slovenly. There was nothing dignified, either in the composition of his mind or person. We have, in the course of his reign, exhibited repeated instances of his ridiculous vanity, prejudices, profusion, folly, and littleness of soul. All that we can add in his favor is, that he was averse to cruelty and injustice; very little addicted to excess, temperate in his meals, kind to his servants, and even desirous of acquiring the love of his subjects, by granting that as a favor which they claimed as a privilege. His reign, though ignoble to himself, was happy to his people. They were enriched by commerce, which no war interrupted. They felt no severe impositions; and the Commons made considerable progress in ascertaining the liberties of the nation."

Character of Charles the First.

"Such was the unworthy and unexampled fate of Charles the First, king of England, who fell a sacrifice to the most atrocious insolence of treason, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and in the twenty-fourth of his reign. He was a prince of a middling stature, robust, and well-proportioned. His hair of a dark color, his forehead high, his complexion pale, his visage long, and his aspect melancholy. He excelled in riding and other manly exercises; he inherited a good understanding from nature, and had cultivated it with great assiduity. His perception was clear and acute, his judgment solid and decisive; he possessed a refined taste for the liberal arts, and was a munificent

Digitized by Google

patron to those who excelled in painting, sculpture, music, and architecture. In his private morals he was unblemished and exemplary, He was merciful, modest, chaste, temperate, religious, personally brave; and we may join with the noble historian in saying, 'he was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian, of the age in which he lived.' He had the misfortune to be bred up in high notions of the prerogative, which he thought his honor and his duty obliged him to maintain. He lived at a time when the spirit of the people became too mighty for those restraints which the regal power derived from the constitution; and when the tide of fanaticism began to overbear the religion of his country, to which he was conscientiously devoted. He suffered himself to be guided by counsellors who were not only inferior to himself in knowledge and judgment, but generally proud, partial and inflexible; and from an excess of conjugal affection, that bordered upon weakness, he paid too much deference to the advice and desire of his consort, who was superstitiously attached to the errors of popery, and importuned him incessantly in favor of the Roman Catholics. Such were the sources of that misgovernment which was imputed to him during the first fifteen years of his reign. From the beginning of the civil war to his fatal catastrophe, his conduct seems to have been unexceptionable. His infirmities and imperfections have been candidly owned in the course of the narration. He was not very liberal to his dependents; his conversation was not easy, nor his address pleasing; yet the probity of his heart and the innocence of his manners won the affection of all who attended his person, not even excepting those who had the charge of his confinement. In a word, he certainly deserved the epithet of a virtuous prince, though he wanted some of those shining qualities which constitute the character of a great monarch."

Character of Oliver Cromwell.

"Oliver was of a robust make and constitution, and his aspect was manly, though clownish. His education extended no further than a superficial knowledge of the Latin tongue, but he inherited great talents from nature; though they were such as he could not have exerted to advantage at any other juncture than that of a civil war, inflamed by religious contests. His character was formed from an amazing conjunction of enthusiasm, hypocrisy, and ambition. He was possessed of courage and resolution that overlooked all danger and saw no difficulty. He dived into the characters of mankind with wonderful sagacity, while he concealed his own purposes under the impenetrable shield of dissimulation. He reconciled the most atrocious crimes to the most rigid notions of religious obligation. From the severest exercises of devotion he relaxed into the most ludicrous and idle buffoonery. He preserved the dignity and distance of his character in the midst of the most earnest familiarity. He

Digitized by Google

was cruel and tyrannical, from policy; just and temperate, from inclination; perplexed and despicable in his discourse; clear and consummate in his designs; ridiculous in his reveries; respectable in his conduct; in a word, the strangest compound of villainy and virtue, baseness and magnanimity, absurdity and good sense, that we find upon record in the annals of mankind."

Character of Charles the Second.

"Charles the Second was in his person tall and swarthy, and his countenance marked with strong, harsh lineaments. His penetration was keen, his judgment clear, his understanding extensive, his conversation lively and entertaining, and he possessed the talent of wit and ridicule. He was easy of access, polite, and affable; had he been limited to a private station, he would have passed for the most agreeable and best-natured man of the age in which he lived. His greatest enemies allow him to have been a civil husband and obliging lover, an affectionate father and an indulgent master; even as a prince he manifested an aversion to cruelty and injustice. Yet these good qualities were more than overbalanced by his weakness and defects. He was a scoffer at religion, and a libertine in his morals; careless, indolent, profuse, abandoned to effeminate pleasure, incapable of any noble enterprise, a stranger to manly friendship and gratitude; deaf to the voice of honor, blind to the allurements of glory, and, in a word, wholly destitute of every active virtue. Being himself unprincipled, he believed mankind were false, perfidious, and interested; and therefore he practised dissimulation for his own convenience. He was strongly attached to the French manners, government, and monarch; he was dissatisfied with his own limited prerogative. The majority of his own subjects he despised or hated, as hypocrites, fanatics, and republicans, who had persecuted his father and himself, and sought the destruction of the monarchy. In these sentiments he could not be supposed to pursue the interest of the nation; on the contrary, he seemed to think that his own safety was incompatible with the honor and advantage of his people. Had he been an absolute prince, the subjects would have found themselves quiet and happy under a mild administration; but harassed, as he was by a powerful opposition, and perplexed with perpetual indigence, he thought himself obliged, for his own ease and security, to prosecute measures which rendered his reign a misfortune to the kingdom, and entailed upon him the contempt of all the other powers in Europe. Yet that misfortune did not immediately affect the nation in its commercial concerns. Trade and manufactures flourished more in this reign than at any other era of the English monarchy. Industry was crowned with success, and the people in general lived in ease and affluence."

We shall conclude with the following summary of the qualifications required in an historian. His learning, says Bayle,

Digitized by Google

should be greater than his genius, and his judgment stronger than his imagination. In private life, he should have the character of being free from party, and his former writings ought always to have shown the sincerest attachment to truth. I asked several questions, says the same author, who the historian is? of what country? of what principles? for it is impossible but that his private opinions will almost involuntarily work themselves into his public performances. His style also should be clear, elegant, and nervous. And lastly, to give him a just boldness of sentiment and expression, he should have a consciousness of these his superior abilities. As to the first requisites, how far our author is possessed of them, his former productions will abundantly demonstrate; but in the last, he seems to have fallen short of none of his predecessors.*

* ["It is said that this voluminous work, containing the history of thirteen centuries, and written with uncommon spirit and correctness of language, was composed and finished for the press within fourteen months; one of the greatest exertions of facility of composition ever recorded in the history of literature. Within a space so brief it could not be expected that new facts should be produced; and all the novelty which Smollett's history could present must needs consist in the mode of stating facts, or in the reflections to be deduced from them. In this work, the author fully announced his political principles, which, notwithstanding his Whig education, were those of a modern Tory, and a favorer of the monarchical part of our constitution. For such a strain of sentiment, some readers will think no apology necessary; and by others none which we might propose would be listened to. Smollett has made his own defence, in a letter to Dr. Moore, dated 2d January 1758. He says: 'I desire you will divest yourself of prejudice, at least as much as you can, before you begin to peruse it, and consider well the facts before you pass judgment. Whatever may be the defects of my work, I protest before God I have, as far as in me lay, adhered to truth, without espousing any faction, though I own I sat down to write with a warm side to those principles in which I was educated; but in the course of my inquiries, some of the Whig ministers turned out such a set of sordid knaves, that I could not help stigmatizing them for their want of integrity and sentiment.'"—SIR WALTER SCOTT, Prose Works, vol. iii. p. 148.]

Digitized by Google

II.—CHARLEVOIX'S HISTORY OF PARAGUAY.

[*From the Monthly Review,* 1757. *"Histoire du Paraguay, par Le Père François Xavier de Charlevoix,* de la Compagnie de Jésus." Paris,* 3 *vol.* 4*to.* 1756.]

THE pleasure we find in modern history arises either from the accuracy and veracity of the historian, or from our being unacquainted with the country he describes. In this last respect we look upon the accounts of the traveller as new discoveries, and, in some measure, pardon any improbabilities, by considering the hazards he must have encountered, in procuring us any information whatsoever. Of all accounts, those of the missionaries, as they depart most from truth, stand most in need of this indulgence: the dangers they have undergone should be set in the opposite scale, against the improbabilities they relate; and though we cannot allow them the praise of having given us good accounts, yet it is some merit in them to have given at least *some* account. We are certainly obliged to them for bringing us acquainted with countries, which the badness of climate, the difficulty of access, or the unfavorable disposition of the inhabitants, would still conceal from those whose only motives to a knowledge of them were curiosity or avarice. But such is in general the credulity of those religious adventurers, or so much do they endeavour to impose upon ours, that we often wish they who pretend to teach others the truth, had been better acquainted with it themselves.

* [This learned and industrious Jesuit was born at St. Quentin, in 1684, and died in 1761. He was for some years a missionary in America. His fame rests chiefly on the histories of his travels, which were extensive, and his accounts, though diffuse, are in general considered good authority. He was for twenty-four years employed on the *Journal de Trévoux,* which he enriched with many valuable articles.—*Bib. Univ.*]

Digitized by Google

What has been said of the relations of the missionaries in general may, with propriety, be applied to the author of this performance: a work rather calculated to defend the Jesuit missionaries from the reproach of avarice, or of disaffection to their temporal sovereigns, than to give us a distinct view of a country hitherto so little known. It is hard to say, whether the natural or the civil history of Paraguay, as related by this author, most abounds with improbability. In the one, we are told of birds fighting with serpents, and, upon being wounded, having recourse to an herb, which immediately heals the wound, and gives them strength to renew the combat: also of serpents, who, having swallowed more than they can digest, turn their bellies to the sun, which rotting the skin, the birds light upon, and carry away the remains of the surfeit, and thereby restore health to the reptile. In the other, we hear of missionaries miraculously cured of mortal wounds, travelling twelve days' journey in less than one; bringing down rain; and routing armies at the word of command. Yet, in spite of all this absurdity, the subject is no less curious than uncommon; and some readers, no doubt, may be pleased with an extract from those parts of the history less chargeable with the idle tales above hinted at.

Paraguay (so called from a river of that name) is bounded on the north by the lake des Xarayes, and the provinces of Santa Cruz and Charcas; on the south by the straits of Magellan; on the east by Brazil; and on the north by Chili and Peru. It must not be supposed (says the author) but that in a country of such vast extent, watered by an infinite number of rivers, covered with immense forests, and chains of mountains of an almost immeasurable length, some of which lift themselves above the clouds; in a country where valleys are all subject to inundations more extensive and lasting than are to be met with elsewhere, and

Digitized by Google

which abounds in lakes and marshes, where the stagnating waters putrefying, corrupt the air; in fine, where the cultivated parts bear no proportion to those uncultivated;—in such a country, it must not be supposed that there can be a sameness of climate, or uniformity in the characters and manners of its inhabitants.

What may be said of this people in general is, that they are all, more or less, of an olive complexion; are rather above than below the middle size: have thick legs, large joints, and round flat faces. The men and women, especially in the warm climates, go all naked; and even the women cover only those parts which decency requires should be concealed. The inhabitants of every country, however, have different manners of adorning, or rather disfiguring, themselves; which often give them a shocking appearance. Some, notwithstanding, make caps, and other parts of dress, from the most beautiful feathers of birds, which have a fine effect. The author further informs us, that they are almost all naturally stupid, savage, perfidious, voracious, and addicted to drunkenness, without precaution or forecast, even with respect to the necessaries of life; that they are lazy and indolent, to the last degree, except in some places; that pillage and revenge often render them furious, without making them brave; that they are generally cowards: and that even such of them as have preserved their liberty, owe it solely to those inaccessible parts of the country which they inhabit.

In those vast plains which extend from Buenos Ayres to Chili, and also very far southward, the horses and kine left there by the Spaniards, upon their first abandoning that settlement, have multiplied to such a degree, that in the year 1628 a good horse might have been purchased for two needles, and a cow in proportion; but at present the price is increased: however, no vessel, for thirty years past, has left the port of Buenos Ayres, without taking forty or fifty thousand skins on board. There

Digitized by Google

are some hunters, who only bring away the tongues and the fat the latter, in that country, serving instead of butter and oil.

How great soever our ideas of the increase of those animals may be, yet still they will be enlarged, if we consider the infinite number of dogs, lions, and tigers which prey upon the wild cattle, and destroy incredible numbers of them. It is said that the lion does not wait the approach of danger, like the tiger, but hunts for his diversion, and after killing eight or ten, feasts only upon one. But the wild dog destroys most; and yet, such is the stupid barbarity of the inhabitants, that they only reproach those who would attempt to lessen the number of these mischievous animals! The manner of hunting the wild cattle is singular enough: a number of hunters assemble on horseback, in the midst of one of those large plains where there is the greatest store of game, and then separating, each cuts, with a hatchet, the hinder legs of every beast he overtakes; upon which the animal falls to the ground. The hunter continues the pursuit, cutting away to the right and left, as long as he finds cattle to pursue. Thus each hunter, it is said, can kill eight hundred in an hour; which, however, seems an exaggeration. Upon attempting to escape, the wounded animals only obstruct one another, so that their destroyers have often time to refresh themselves, and begin again. In fine, after some days spent in this violent exercise, they return by the road they came, and carry away all that they think convenient, of the animals they have slain.

The cotton-shrub is a native of this country. Besides maize, manioc, and potatoes, which make the greatest part of the food of those Indians who do not lead a wandering life, there are several fruits and simples found here unknown to the Europeans. No country abounds more with serpents of various kinds, and their apes are almost of human stature. Foxes are common in

Digitized by Google

some provinces, and they have hares that are extremely tame, and whose skins are beautifully mottled.

Westward of the river of Paraguay (Rio de la Plata) lies the extensive province of Guaycurus, the greatest part of which is uninhabitable; for in the wet season the ground is so swampy, and in the dry so parched, that the soil opens in large fissures, and the inhabitants would perish for want of water, did they not retire to the neighborhood of those lakes that never dry up; the waters of which are, however, extremely unwholesome.

Among the customs peculiar to this people, that of the children being held in the greatest dependence till they arrive at the age of fourteen, is one. Before that time, every person exercises authority over them; but at this age, they are pierced with a certain instrument in several parts of the body: an operation which, though extremely painful, they demand with eagerness, and sustain with intrepidity; and then they receive their liberty and their name.

Their discipline in war is extremely strict; and besides that which they continually wage with the Spaniards, they are generally embroiled every year with some of their neighbors. They never attempt to face the enemy in the open plain, but have a thousand stratagems to lead him into defiles, where they may fall upon him with advantage, as their only weapons are the arrow, the hatchet, and a cutlass made of bone.

In the kingdom of Tuccuman, farther west than Guaycurus, it is somewhat remarkable that those parts which approach the line are coldest, which is owing to their lying in the neighborhood of exceeding high mountains. Those who inhabit the northern parts of this country are mostly subsisted by fishing; those who live more to the south, by hunting. In general, they are of smaller stature, and more stupid than the other Americans; and some of them have no other habitations than caves

Digitized by Google

dug under ground, from whence they never stir till hunger obliges them. Their ordinary beast of burthen is a sheep, almost as big as a camel, and of surprising strength. Lions and tigers infest the country, but the first are small, and not very dangerous; the latter are in no country so large or so fierce: the Indians set fire to the woods, and kill them with their arrows as they attempt to avoid the flames.

The country of Chaco is remarkably subject to inundations, which proceed from the melting of the snow on the great neighboring mountains. These inundations are often so sudden, that the inhabitants are obliged to embark in their canoes or to climb trees, and remain there till the flood subsides. But these inconveniences are recompensed by the advantages which ensue; for scarcely has the deluge passed away, when the plains of Chaco put on the appearance of the most beautiful parterres, and, beheld from the mountains, form a prospect that, perhaps, nothing in nature can equal. To what advantage, continues the author, might all this turn, were the country inhabited by an industrious people, whose labors might correct the inconveniences to which it is subject, and who knew how to avail themselves of its natural advantages! But the inhabitants of Chaco are contented with slightly stirring the earth after it has been flooded; which, notwithstanding the little pains taken, affords all the necessaries of life in great abundance.

We are told of an amphibious animal which infests the country of Tapé, somewhat resembling a ram, but with the teeth and claws of a tiger, which it surpasses in ferocity. The Indians never behold these creatures without terror; and when they leave the lakes (which they often do in numbers) there is no other method of avoiding their fury than by climbing a tree; which, however, does not always afford protection; for this terrible animal sometimes roots up the tree, which, falling, delivers

Digitized by Google

up the unhappy victim; or perhaps he waits at the foot of it, till the Indian, spent with hunger, can no longer support himself, but falls a prey to his merciless enemy.

The Jesuit missionaries, by a long succession of pretended miracles, by perseverance, by every stratagem that policy could suggest, have brought most of the inhabitants of this extensive country to embrace the Roman Catholic religion; have brought them from their forests and caves, into social communities; have induced the Indians, formerly poor, and who had hardly wherewith to maintain themselves, now to pay tribute, and support the luxury and grandeur of the king of Spain; and have centred out the country into little republics, as the author calls them, where the Jesuit and his assistant are generally absolute.

In short, if the accounts here given are to be believed, the Indians are now brought into the most civilized state, and have the necessaries and luxuries of life in almost as great plenty and elegance as the Europeans themselves.

The author, towards the end of the third volume, corrects a passage in the account of Anson's Voyage round the World, where it is affirmed, that the bay of St. Julian receives a very large river which issues from a great lake. In the said voyage are also given two plates of the bay. Father Charlevoix, from a variety of observations, particularly those of Father Quiroga, who went round the bay, and examined it with the greatest exactness, affirms that it receives not even the smallest rivulet.

The greatest part of this performance affords little to engage the attention of the English reader. It is chiefly to be regarded as an ecclesiastical history, calculated rather for those countries which still retain the most bigoted superstition, than for the perusal of such as choose to examine into prodigies before they believe them. Yet, with all the absurdities with which it is replete, it will possibly have its desired effect; for it can

Digitized by Google

sink the reputation of the Jesuits no lower than it is already sunk among the wise of all nations; and it may greatly exalt their character for holiness, among the ignorant and superstitious.

III.—VOLTAIRE'S UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

[*Universal History, &c. In a Letter "To the Authors of the Monthly Review,"* 1757.]

The number of surreptitious editions which have been published in M. Voltaire's name, would make us imagine that both his friends and the booksellers were alike combined against his fame and his property; these, by stealing his manuscripts, and those by publishing his immature productions. I really compassionate this gentleman for his want of discernment in the choice of friends; and their base treatment of him must surely excite the indignation of every lover of literature. It is the same indignation, no doubt, which has so often transported the author himse'f, even beyond the bounds of truth, and provoked him strenuously to disown some pieces which he afterwards found no difficulty in publicly reclaiming, when the production made its appearance somewhat more methodically. Had his friends stolen his manuscripts but once, or twice, we could have forgiven them; but to make a trade of it, as they have done!—our astonishment at their effrontery, even exceeds our pity for the suffering author.

Our surprise is still increased when we consider, that manuscripts are a commodity in which thieves do not much care to deal. We know not what veneration the thieves abroad may have for wit, but, among us, whole reams of poetry, history, and

Digitized by Google

even divinity, would lie as safe in the public highways, as in the garrets of the composers, unless the price paid by the shops for waste-paper should tempt the sons of industry to carry it off.

But the depriving an author of his property, or his fame, is not all the mischief that attends these surreptitious publications: the world may at least be brought to question every thing that appears under his name, and, perhaps, even his genuine productions may, like the rest, be treated as imposture. Shall I repeat an old story? A lady who had heard much of the marquis de Racan, became very desirous of a personal acquaintance with him, and sent him an invitation to her house; the overture coming to the knowledge of two facetious gentlemen of his acquaintance, they resolved to anticipate the favor intended for the marquis. Accordingly, two hours before the appointed time, one of them waited upon the lady, and confidently assumed the name of Racan. He was received with every demonstration of respect. On her part, the lady showed the best side of her understanding, talked over all her criticisms, displayed her wit, and was extremely brilliant. On the other hand, she was infinitely charmed with the conversation of the gentleman; who, however, thought proper to make this first visit but a short one. No sooner had he taken his leave, than his companion, who had waited for the opportunity, also assumes the marquis's name, and introduces himself with the utmost effrontery. The lady was a little discomposed at the imposture of her former visitant; but the protestations and well counterfeited indignation of the new one, removing her chagrin, she recovered her good humor, rallied away, and was the best company in the world. The second false Racan had scarce left the well-pleased lady, enjoying all the triumphs of her own vivacity, when the marquis himself actually arrived. We shall not attempt to describe the confusion of both parties on this occasion. In short, the lady resolved not to

Digitized by Google

hazard a third deception, and the real Racan was refused admittance. The application is obvious.

But, to come to the immediate occasion of this epistle: namely, a new publication of no less than seven octavos,* ascribed to M. Voltaire, which, if one may be allowed to judge by the excellence of the performance, is not stolen into the world, though we have no other authority than the bookseller's word for its being genuine. This publication contains the Universal History, or a Survey of the Manners and Customs of all Nations, from the time of Charlemagne; the materials better methodized, more enlarged, and far more accurate, than in the former editions. With this history is connected that of the age of Louis XIV.; and the whole is continued down to the year 1756. The additions are very numerous, particularly in those parts relative to the manners of the East; though even here the author and the public have suffered, it seems, an irreparable loss, in that of the manuscript which contained the history of the Oriental Arts and Sciences; the materials of which, we are told, he was furnished by a Greek of Smyrna, named Dadiki, interpreter to king George I. The history of the age of Louis XIV. is increased in this edition more than one-third, particularly in the anecdotes concerning

* ["There is an addition of seven volumes of Universal History to Voltaire's Works, that I think will charm you. I almost like it the best of his works: it is what you have seen extended, and the Memoirs of Louis XIV. *refondues* in it. From mistakes in the English part I suppose there are great ones in the more distant histories; yet altogether it is a fine work. He is, as one might believe, worst informed on the present times. He says eight hundred persons were put to death for the last rebellion. I don't believe a quarter of the number were: and he makes the first lord Derwentwater—who, poor man! was in no such high-spirited mood—bring his son, who by the way was not above a year and a half old, upon the scaffold to be sprinkled with the blood. However, he is in the right to expect to be believed; for he believes all the romances in Lord Anson's voyage; and how Admiral Almanzor made one man of war box the ears of the whole empire of China!"—*Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 22.]

Digitized by Google

that monarch's reign: and the history of the War of 1741, which in former editions reached no lower than the battle of Fontenoy, is now continued to the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

It would be superfluous to add our commendation of those pieces, which, even in their imperfect state, have deservedly gained the approbation of the public. Voltaire's beauties as a writer are many and obvious; his faults few, and those well concealed under the dazzle of his abilities. It is certain M. Voltaire often colors too strongly. Fond of characters and anecdotes that may serve to strike the reader, he generally raises or depresses both, as best suits the point of representation he has in view; and if he does not find his facts and personages sufficiently remarkable, or to his purpose, he generally makes them so. His maxims are commonly drawn from too small a number of instances, to be always true; and though as short and comprehensive as those of Tacitus, they are, by no means, so striking. The remarks of Tacitus seem to rise from the narration; those of Voltaire often proceed from the man. The partiality of which he so often accuses the English historians, he himself has not been able to avoid. In fine, he seems to confirm the remark of one of his countrymen, "that poets would make the best historians were they more attached to truth."

In that part of the work now before me, which gives the history of the late Rebellion in Scotland, M. Voltaire flourishes away, as follows:—

"In this war the kingdom of Great Britain was upon the point of experiencing such another contest as that of the White and Red Rose. Prince Charles Edward, grandson to the unfortunate James II. of England, by the father's side, and to the great John Sobieski of Poland, by the mother's, attempted to ascend the British throne, by one of those enterprises of which

Digitized by Google

we have very few examples, except among the English alone, or in the fabulous times of antiquity.

On the 12th of August, 1745, he embarked in a little frigate, of eighteen guns, without apprising the court of France of his intentions; and provided only with seven officers, one thousand eight hundred swords, twelve hundred muskets, two thousand pounds in money, and not a single soldier,—for the conquest of three kingdoms.

"Escaping, however, all the dangers of his voyage, he landed on the southeast coast of Scotland, and was received with every mark of homage by the inhabitants of Moydart, to whom he made himself known. 'But what can we do?' said they, falling at his feet, 'What can men do unfurnished with arms? Poor and helpless! we live on oat-bread and cultivate an ungrateful soil.'—'I will share your labors in its cultivation,' replied the prince; 'your provisions shall be mine; I will partake of your poverty, and I will furnish you with arms.'

"The poor people, melted at his humility, yet encouraged by his resolution, took arms in his favor. The neighboring clans flocked to his assistance; and a bit of taffety which he had brought with him, was displayed as the royal standard. As soon as he found himself at the head of fifteen hundred men, he directed his march to the city of Perth; took possession of it, and caused himself to be proclaimed regent of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland, in the name of his father James III. Strengthened by the arrival of some Scottish lords, who repaired to his standard, he marched to Edinburgh, and took possession of that capital. The English privy council set a price upon his head, and thirty thousand pounds were offered to whoever should deliver him up dead or alive. He gave no answer to this, but gaining a complete victory, with his fifteen hundred mountaineers, over the English army, at Preston Pans, where he made as many

Digitized by Google

prisoners as he had men. These highlanders are the only people of Europe who preserve the ancient military dress and buckler of the Romans; but with the dress, they had also the Roman courage, and wanted only their discipline to equal them. At this time the Kings of France and Spain remitted him some supplies of money; they wrote to him; honored him with the title of brother; and between two and three hundred men of the royal regiment of Scots, with some piquets, were sent to him from France, and landed, after having passed through the midst of the English fleet.

"The young prince conquered all before him, and proceeded even within thirty leagues of London; he was then at the head of about eight thousand men. A different general from that who commanded at the battle of Preston Pans, advanced from Scotland to oppose him; the prince returned in the midst of winter, attacked him at Falkirk, and a second time gained the victory.

"Now was the time to bring about a revolution. Part of the inhabitants of London were secretly attached to his interests, and ferment and confusion reigned through the capital. The duke de Richelieu was upon the coasts of France, ready to bring ten thousand men to his assistance; but France being at that time unprovided with ships of war, the enterprise came to nothing, and all the efforts and victories of Charles were rendered fruitless. The duke of Cumberland, at the head of a well-disciplined army, properly provided with cannon, routed those mountaineers, who had nothing to oppose to him but their courage. This battle, which was fought at Culloden, not far from Inverness, proved decisive, and the whole Scottish army was dispersed. The prince, after such a calamity, experienced more afflicting adventures than those of Charles the Second, upon his defeat at Worcester; like him he wandered from place to place, sometimes with but two

Digitized by Google

friends, companions of his distress; sometimes with one only; and sometimes with not a creature to comfort or attend him; lurking in caverns by day, and making the forests his habitation by night; his clothes reduced to rags, and himself destitute of subsistence; seeking refuge among desolate islands; and pursued incessantly by those who sought his destruction, for the reward which was set upon his head.

"Having one day walked thirty miles on foot, being pressed with hunger, and ready to sink beneath the weight of his distress, he ventured to enter a house, the master of which he well knew was attached to the opposite party. 'Behold,' said he, entering, 'the son of your king, who comes to ask a morsel of bread, and a coat to keep off the severity of the season! I know thou art my enemy, but I believe thou hast too much honor to take advantage of my distress, or abuse the confidence I repose in thee: take and preserve these rags that cover me; thou mayest return them to me one day, in the palace of the kings of England.' The gentleman, touched at his misfortunes, gave him all the succor his ability, in a country so desolate, would permit, and inviolably preserved the secret.

"After long wandering thus upon the coasts of Lochaber, he finally escaped the pursuit of his enemies. A little vessel wafted him over to Bretagne; from whence he went to Paris, where he remained till the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; by which the king of France was obliged, for the common good, to forbid him his dominions. This was the completion of the misfortunes of the unfortunate race of the Stuarts. Since that time the retreat of this prince is concealed from the whole world."

We shall next give our readers an extract from our author's concise account of the present war:—

"In the midst of a peace which had its foundation in mutual jealousy, and in warlike preparations, equally terrible to both

Digitized by Google

parties, an unforeseen event has changed the whole political system of Europe, for the present, and time will give it a new appearance hereafter. A trifling quarrel between France and England, for certain savage lands, dependent on Canada, has inspired the sovereigns of Europe with new politics. This quarrel hath arisen from the negligence of the ministers who were employed in concluding the treaty of Utrecht, in 1712 and 1713. By this treaty, France had ceded to England the country of Acadia, in the neighborhood of Canada: but the limits were not specified, for the ministers themselves were ignorant of them. Such errors are seldom committed in private contracts. Confusion was the necessary result of this omission. Did justice and philosophy enter into the disputes of mankind, they would show that both sides disputed concerning a country to which neither had the least right; but principles like these seldom influence the affairs of the world. The English were for having the whole country, even to the frontiers of Canada, and for destroying the commerce of France in this part of America. They were far superior in North America, both in the riches and the number of their colonies, but still more so at sea, by their fleets; and having destroyed the marine of France in the year 1741, they had flattered themselves that nothing would be able to oppose them, either by land or sea, in that part of the world. They have, however, deceived themselves in all these respects, at least in what has yet happened.

"They began, in the year 1755, by attacking the French on the side of Canada; and, without any declaration of war, made prize of more than three hundred merchant ships belonging to France: they also took some vessels of other nations which were carrying French merchandise.

"The conduct of the king of France, on this occasion, was quite different from that of Lewis XIV. He at first contented

Digitized by Google

himself with demanding justice, and even forbad his subjects to make the least opposition. Lewis XIV. had affected to talk with superiority in the courts of Europe; Lewis XV. made those courts perceive the superiority which was arrogated by the English; Lewis XIV. was reproached with ambitiously aiming at universal monarchy; Lewis XV. made the world perceive the real dominion which the English usurped, and actually exercised over the seas. And hence, as Europe once desired the humbling of Lewis XIV. so they now wished to lower the pretensions of the English.

"In the mean time, Lewis XV. enjoyed a glorious and just revenge. His forces gained a complete victory over the English in North America; and a formidable fleet issued from his ports, with design to invade the electoral dominions of the king of England.

"This invasion of Germany again threatened Europe with new commotions, the first sparks of which had been kindled in North America. This it was that gave rise to a change in the whole political system of Europe. The king of England intended to oppose the French, in Germany, with an army of Russians, which the English were to keep in pay. The empress of Russia was at this time in alliance with the emperor, and the empress queen of Hungary. The king of Prussia had reason to fear lest the Russians, the Imperialists, and Hanoverians, should, with united forces, oppress him. Though he had a hundred and fifty thousand men in arms, he gladly came into an alliance with the king of England, to hinder, on the one hand, the Russians from entering Germany, and on the other, to prevent the French from doing the like on the opposite side. This fine stroke in politics had effects which were very disagreeable to the king of Prussia, and which were unexpected by all; it reconciled the houses of Austria and Bourbon! What so many treaties, so

Digitized by Google

many marriages, could never bring to pass,—what none could hope for after the accession of Charles V. to the empire, was, at the end of two hundred years, brought about without any trouble, by the umbrage France had taken at a prince of the empire.

"But treaties were not all the means the king of France made use of toward obtaining revenge for the depredations of the English. He was supplied with all the money he had occasion for, by one of those resources which are to be found only in kingdoms so opulent as that of France. Twenty new places of farmers-general, and some borrowed money, sufficed to support the beginning of the war; while Great Britain was exhausted with exorbitant taxes.

"The coasts of England were menaced with a pretended invasion. These were not the times of queen Elizabeth, who, with the powers of England alone, having Scotland to fear, and scarce able to restrain Ireland, bravely withstood the efforts of Philip the Second. The king of England, George the Second, thought it necessary to call over the Hanoverians and Hessians to defend the country. The English, who had looked for no such incident, murmured to see themselves overrun with strangers. The displeasure of some was changed into fright, and all trembled for their liberty."

The rest of the chapter is taken up with an account of the siege of Port Mahon; where we see the French performing prodigies of valor, scaling those walls, in the face of the enemy, which others would find the utmost danger in descending, even in cool blood But Frenchmen can do or say any thing.

In the anecdotes of Lewis XIV. the author presents his reader with some pieces written by that monarch. The following are part of the instructions which he delivered to his grandson, Philip V., upon his departure for Spain. They were penned in

Digitized by Google

haste (as we are told), and with a negligence which discovers the genius and disposition of a writer much better than studied compositions would have done. In these we behold both the father and the king.

"Love the Spaniards, and all other subjects of your crown, and servants of your person. Prefer not those who flatter you most; esteem such as hazard your displeasure by pursuing what is right: such are your friends in reality.

"Endeavor to be yourself the happiness of your subjects; and, for this reason, make war only when you are forced to it; after having well considered and weighed with your council the motives which render it necessary.

"Endeavor to put your finances into good order. Let the Indies and your fleets be your chief concern. Keep commerce in your thoughts. Still maintain the strictest union with France: what can be more advantageous to the interest of both kingdoms than a union which nothing will be able to resist!"*

"If you are constrained to make war, command your armies in person.

"Endeavor to reinstate your troops in all quarters, but begin with those of Flanders.

"Never leave business for pleasure; but portion out set times for amusement as well as labor.

"There are few pleasures more innocent than hunting, or that of an agreeable country-house: provided neither be too expensive.

"Give great attention to those who address you upon business, and be very slow in deciding at the beginning.

"When you have received proper information, be mindful that

* It seems, however, he was deceived in this particular.

Digitized by Google

it is you yourself who are to decide; however, though you are never so well experienced, always hear the arguments and advice of your council before you determine.

"Do all that lies in your power to find out those of the greatest merit, that you may be well-served in all exigencies.

"Endeavor to have your governors and viceroys always natives of Spain.

"Use good manners to all the world. Never say any thing displeasing to any person whatsoever; yet pay peculiar distinctions to rank and merit.

"Testify your gratitude to the late king, and to all those who advised the making you his successor.

"Repose great confidence in Cardinal Porto-Carero, and let him see the pleasure his past conduct has afforded you.

"I think something considerable should be done for the Ambassador who first demanded you, and paid his homage as a subject.

"Forget not Bedmar: he has merit, and is capable of doing you service.

"Place entire confidence in the Duke de Harcourt; he has capacity, and he has honesty; all his advice will be intended for your good.

"Keep all the French within bounds.

"Use all your domestics well, but never indulge them in too many familiarities, nor ever depend too much upon them. As long as they behave prudently, employ them, but for the most trifling fault discharge them; and never take their part against the Spaniards.

"Keep no correspondence with the Queen Dowager, but such as cannot be dispensed with. Oblige her to leave Madrid, but do not permit her to go out of Spain. Wherever she resides, observe her conduct, and endeavor to prevent her interfering in

Digitized by Google

business; and such as maintain a close correspondence with her are to be suspected.

"Ever love your relations. Still remember the pain which they felt at your departure. Preserve a correspondence with them in trifles, as well as in things of more importance. Ask from us whatever you think proper, with which you cannot be supplied in the country to which you go. We shall use the same liberties with you.

"Never forget that you are a Frenchman, and be ever on your guard against contingencies. When you have an assurance of the succession of Spain for your children, visit your kingdoms, go to Naples, to Sicily, to Milan, and to Flanders; thus you will have an opportunity of seeing us: you may visit in the mean time Catalonia, Arragon, and other parts of Spain. See what is to be done with respect to Ceuta.

"Throw some money among the populace upon your arrival in Spain, particularly on your entry into Madrid.

"Do not appear in the least disgusted at the extraordinary figures you will find among your subjects. Offer not to ridicule them, though they seem ever so absurd. Every country has its peculiar fashions; you will soon be familiarized to what at first appears monstrous.

"Avoid, as much as possible, the doing those a favor who endeavor to obtain it by a bribe. On proper occasions dispense your favors liberally, but receive no presents from others, or at least only trifles. If at any time you cannot well avoid the acceptance, after a few days have intervened, make more than an equivalent return.

"Reserve a particular cabinet for such things as you would keep secret from others; of which yourself must carry the key.

"I shall conclude with the most important part of my advice. Suffer yourself not to be governed. Assume the king; never

Digitized by Google

keep a favorite, or a prime minister. Listen to, consult with, your privy council; but let none but yourself determine. God, who has made you a king, will also give you such lights as are requisite for government, while your intentions preserve their integrity."

M. Voltaire has made several additions to his memoirs of the French writers; for instance, those of the great Montesquieu appeared not in the former editions.

"Charles Montesquieu, president of the parliament of Bordeaux, born in 1689, published, at the age of thirty-two, his 'Persian Letters,' a work of humor, abounding with strokes which testify a genius above the performance. It is written in imitation of the 'Siamese Letters' of Du Freny, and of the 'Turkish Spy;'* but it is an imitation which shows what the originals should have been. The success their works met with was, for the most part, owing to the foreign air of their performances; the success of the 'Persian Letters' arose from the delicacy of their satire. That satire which in the mouth of an Asiatic is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from a European. The genius which appeared in this performance, opened to M. Montesquieu the gates of the French Academy, even though it had been reflected upon by him. Yet at the same time, the liberty which he took in speaking of government, and the abuses of religion, induced Cardinal de Fleury to exclude him from the intended honor. However, the author took very politic measures for reconciling this minister to his interests. He published a new edition of this work; in which he retrenched,

* [The "Turkish Spy," which was pretended to have been written originally in Arabic, and from Arabic translated into Italian, was the production of John Paul Marana, a Genoese. It was during his residence at Paris, that he published this work. He lived there in a philosophical mediocrity on a small pension granted him by Lewis XIV.; and in the last years of his life retired to his native country, where he died in 1693.]

Digitized by Google

or softened, all that could be censured by that great man, either as cardinal or minister. The author carried the book, thus altered, to the cardinal; who, though he seldom read, looked over part of the performance. The air of confidence which appeared in the author upon presenting it, together with the instances of some persons of credit in his favor, reconciled the cardinal; and Montesquieu was admitted into the academy.

"After this he published his treatise on the grandeur and decline of the Romans, a subject which, though trite, he rendered new, by fine reflection and exquisite coloring; it may be looked upon as a political history of the Roman empire. His last publication was that of 'The Spirit of Laws;' which appeared in the year 1748. He died at Paris in 1755, in his sixty-sixth year."

IV.—HANWAY'S EIGHT DAYS' JOURNEY.

[*From the Monthly Review*, 1757. "*A Journal of eight Days' Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston-upon-Thames: through Southampton, Wiltshire, &c. With Miscellaneous Thoughts, moral and religious: in sixty-four Letters: addressed to two Ladies of the Partie. To which is added an Essay on Tea; considered as pernicious to Health, obstructing Industry, and impoverishing the Nation: with an Account of its Growth, and great Consumption in these Kingdoms. With several political Reflections; and Thoughts on Public Love. In thirty-two Letters to two Ladies. By Mr. H* * * * *. The second Edition, corrected and enlarged.** 8vo. 12 *vols.*

Mr. Hanway, who has already obliged the public with an account of his travels into distant parts of the world,† here pre-

* The first edition was printed about a year ago, and presented by the author to his friends only, but not sold.

† [Jonas Hanway published, in 1753, "An Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, with Travels through Russia, Persia, Germany, and Holland." These travels contain very curious details of the then state of Persia. —*Croker's Boswell*, vol. i. p 381.]

Digitized by Google

sents the reader with the result of his travels nearer home. This journal was, perhaps, at first designed for the amusement of his friends, and by their too partial applause he might have been tempted to send it into the world; however, he can lose little reputation though he should not succeed in an attempt of such a nature as this; especially as he has already shown himself equal to subjects and undertakings that require much greater abilities. Novelty of thought and elegance of expression, are what we chiefly require in treating on topics with which the public are already acquainted; but the art of placing trite materials in new and striking lights, cannot be reckoned among the excellences of this gentleman; who generally enforces his opinions, by arguments rather obvious than new, and that convey more conviction than pleasure to the reader.

The description of the places through which this journey of eight days was performed, takes up but a very little part of this performance. The reader will find that, in his present travels, the author's mental are much more frequent than his personal excursions; as, through the whole, he takes every opportunity (and sometimes forces one) to indulge his propensity to moralizing. In this capacity, indeed, he shows great goodness of heart, and an earnest concern for the welfare of his country. However, though his opinions are generally true, and his regard for virtue seems very sincere, yet these alone are not, at this day, sufficient to defend the cause of truth; style, elegance, and all the allurements of good writing, must be called in aid; especially if the age be in reality, as it is represented by this author, averse to every thing that but seems to be serious.

In these letters, which may with more propriety be styled essays, or meditations, the author informs the two ladies of his party concerning every thing that happened upon the journey, (though it is supposed they wanted no information in that

Digitized by Google

respect,) and on every occurrence he expatiates, and indulges in reflection. The appearance of an inn on the road suggests to our philosopher an eulogium on temperance; the confusion of a disappointed landlady gives rise to a letter on resentment; and the view of a company of soldiers furnishes out materials for an essay on war. But he seems to reserve his powers till he comes to treat of Tea, against which he inveighs through almost the whole second volume; assuming the physician, philosopher, and politician. To this plant he ascribes the scurvy, weakness of nerves, low spirits, lassitudes, melancholy, "and twenty different disorders, which, in spite of the faculty, have yet no names, except the general one of nervous complaints." Nay, (as the author exclaims,) our very nurses drink tea! and, what is more deplorable still, they drink *run* tea, that costs not above three or four shillings a pound! The ladies spoil their teeth and complexions, and the men have lost their stature and comeliness, by the use of this pernicious drug: our time is consumed in drinking it; our morals injured by the luxuries it induces; our fortunes impaired in procuring it; and the balance of trade turned against us by its importation. To remedy these evils, the author, though he allows us to continue the use of our porcelain cups, and our sipping, would substitute in the place of tea, several very harmless herbs of our own growth, such as ground-ivy, pennyroyal, horehound, trefoil, sorrel, not forgetting cowslip flowers, whose wine, he tells us, is a powerful soporific; and, truly, if this be the case, the infusion might have some good effects at many a tea-table.

"It is the curse of this nation," exclaims our author, "that the laborer and mechanic will ape the lord; and therefore I can discover no way of abolishing the use of tea, unless it be done by the irresistible force of example. It is an epidemical disease; if any seeds of it remain, it will engender an universal infection.

Digitized by Google

To what a height of folly must a nation be arrived, when the common people are not satisfied with wholesome food at home, but must go to the remotest regions to please a vicious palate! There is a certain lane near Richmond, where beggars are often seen, in the summer season, drinking their tea. You may see laborers who are mending the roads drinking their tea; it is even drank in cinder-carts; and, what is not less absurd, sold out in cups to hay-makers. He who should be able to drive three Frenchmen before him, or she who might be a breeder of such a race of men, are to be seen sipping their tea!

> "Was it the breed of such as these,
> That quell'd the proud Hysperides?"

Were they the sons of tea-sippers who won the fields of Cressy and Agincourt, or dyed the Danube's streams with Gallic blood? What will be the end of such effeminate customs extended to those persons who must get their bread by the labors of the field!

"From the pride of imitating their betters, and the habit of drinking this deluding infusion, nurses in general, in this part of the island, contract a passion for this bitter draught, which bears down all the duties of humanity before it! Nor are these alone distempered with this canine appetite for tea; you know it to be almost literally true in many instances; every mistress of a family knows it to be true of their servants in general, especially the females, who demand your submission to this execrable custom; and you submit as if the evil was irremediable; nay, your servants' servants, down to the very beggars, will not be satisfied unless they consume the produce of the remote country of China. They consider it as their Magna Charta, and will die by the sword or famine, rather than not follow the example of their mistresses. What would you say, if they should take it into their heads not to work without an allowance of French wine?

Digitized by Google

This would not be thought a more extravagant demand now than tea was esteemed forty years ago. Consider the tendency of these pernicious and absurd customs!

"Look into all the cellars in London, you will find men or women sipping their tea in the morning or afternoon, and very often both morning and afternoon: those will have tea who have not bread. I once took a ramble for two months, attended only by a servant: I strolled far into several parts of England, and when I was tired of riding, I walked, and, with as much decency as I could, often visited little huts, to see how the people lived. I still found the same game was playing, and misery itself had no power to banish tea, which had frequently introduced that misery. I have been told, that in some places, where the people are so poor that no one family possesses all the necessary apparatus for tea, they carry them to each other's houses, to the distance of a mile or two, and club materials for this fantastic amusement!

"What a wild infatuation is this! it took its rise from example; by example it is supported; and example alone can abolish the use of it. The suppression of this dangerous custom depends entirely on the example of ladies of rank in this country. Tea will certainly be acknowledged a bad thing as soon as you leave off drinking it. No lady's woman, or gentlewoman's chamber-maid, will drink a liquor which her mistress no longer uses. Some indeed have resolution enough in their own houses, to confine the use of tea to their own table; but their number is so extremely small, amidst a numerous acquaintance, I know only of Mrs. T****, whose name ought to be written out in letters of gold."

Thus we see how fortunate some folks are. Mrs. T. is praised for confining luxury to her own table; she earns fame, and saves something in domestic expenses into the bargain! But, to be as much in earnest as Mr. Hanway himself seems to be,—this

Digitized by Google

gentleman appears more desirous of saying every thing that may be said on every subject, than of only selecting all that can be said to the purpose; and by endeavoring to obviate every doubt that might still remain with his reader, he often uses a redundancy of argument, that rather serves to tire than convince us.

When he treats of tea in his assumed medical capacity, he speaks by no means like an adept in physic; indeed, it is not to be expected, that every gentleman can be acquainted with a science that requires so much time and industry in the acquisition, and therefore we may forgive his errors without pointing them out; but if to be unacquainted with the medical art indicates no want of general knowledge, perhaps it argues some want of prudence, to speak of subjects to which our acquirements are not adequate.

Yet after all, why so violent an outcry against this devoted article of modern luxury? Every nation that is rich hath had, and will have, its favorite luxuries. Abridge the people in one, they generally run into another; and the reader may judge which will be most conducive to either mental or bodily health: the watery beverage of a modern fine lady, or the strong beer, and stronger waters of her great-grandmother?*

* [Dr. Johnson also wrote, in the Literary Magazine for 1756, a defence of tea against Mr. Hanway's furious attack upon that popular beverage. In reference to this work, he one day said, "Jonas acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home." See *Boswell*, vol. iii. p. 137.]

Digitized by Google

V.—MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE MAINTENON.

[*From the Monthly Review*, 1757. *Memoirs for the History of Madame de Maintenon, and of the last Age. Translated from the French, by the Author of the Female Quixote.*"* 12 *mo.* 5 *vols.*]

UNACCOUNTABLE is the fondness of some French historians, for connecting the revolutions of an age with the Memoirs of persons who neither possessed sufficient power, nor were so deeply engaged in intrigue, as to influence any of its important events. We are at a loss in what class to place such amphibious productions; as they are generally an assemblage of truth and falsehood, in which history wears the face of romance, and romance assumes the appearance of history; where the writer's endeavors are equally exerted in rendering trifles important, and subjects of importance trifling. Who but must smile at accounts wherein some little personage, indebted to the historian, perhaps, for notice, takes the lead in a history of Europe, and connects its incidents! It brings to memory the courts of ancient kings, where a dwarf was generally employed as master of ceremonies.

The work now under view consists, in the original, of fifteen volumes; the first six of which contain Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon, regularly connected, in the manner of a history; the next ensuing eight contain this lady's epistolary Correspondence; and the last is made up of letters from the Bishop of Chartres, her spiritual director.

Fifteen volumes, relative to the history of Madame de Maintenon, who could ever have expected to see? But never was the republic of letters so copiously supplied from the press as at present: "Quo corruptior est status, eo plures sunt leges." We

* [Mrs. Charlotte Lenox; for whose comedy of the "Sister," Goldsmith wrote an excellent Epilogue. See vol. iv. p. 130.]

Digitized by Google

could with pleasure and emolument have accompanied the lady in her adventures through half a volume, or so; but to be baited with the piety of a female devotee,* to be served up with the stale amours of an old monarch, battered with debauchery, through almost fifteen long volumes! The historian may persuade us to pardon the failings of his heroine, but we can never forgive his prolixity in her defence.

The author makes many professions of veracity, and informs us he has rummaged several cabinets for authentic materials; yet still it must be acknowledged, he frequently forgets the historian in the novelist; often giving us speeches which are as unlikely to be genuine, as it is improbable that the speakers or hearers should ever divulge such conversation. He frequently contradicts truth, and as frequently himself; sometimes substitutes antithesis to thought, and seems more desirous of being smart than judicious. With all these imperfections, can we expect entertainment in such a writer? Yet in spite of his defects, he certainly affords a great deal: his trifles are often made interesting, by an engaging manner; his reflections are always sprightly; and his style so peculiarly elegant (though in some places too much labored,) that we easily perceive the subject far beneath the writer's abilities, and though we see not in him much merit as an historian, he possesses many excellences as a writer. In short, such readers as like a great deal of amusement, with a little history and a little truth, will have their taste amply gratified, and their time agreeably spent upon the performance of M. Beaumelle.

* [" If you have not got the new Letters and Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon, I beg I may recommend them for your summer reading. The fourth volume has persuaded me of the sincerity of her devotion; two or three letters have made me even a little jealous for my adored Madame de Sevigné."—*Horace Walpole*, Corresp. vol. i. p. 502.]

Digitized by Google

We are at a loss to account for M. Voltaire's calling the present performance a romance; he, of all men, should have been cautious of thus stigmatizing a work which bears so strong a resemblance to "The Age of Louis the Fourteenth."*

VI.—FORMEY'S PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANIES.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*Philosophical Miscellanies on various Subjects. To which is prefixed an Account of the Author and his Works, by Himself. From the Original of M. Formey,† Perpetual Secretary to the Royal Academy at Berlin.*" 12*mo.*]

This volume of miscellanies is prefaced with the author's own account of himself. What he found in his life worthy of thus being made public, it is not easy to determine, since all its transactions are composed of his being bred a divine, his being made professor of eloquence in an university, secretary to a literary society, and having wrote a great many books. There is not, perhaps, in nature a being more fond of flattery than the professor in a college. Accustomed to adulation from their pupils, they expect it from the world; and when fame does not happen to blow the trumpet sufficiently in their praise, have been frequently found to strengthen the blast themselves. Though their whole lives may have passed away between the fireside and the easy

* ["Between La Beaumelle and Voltaire, one remains with scarce a fixed idea about that time. I wish they would produce their authorities and proofs; without which I am grown to believe neither."—*Horace Walpole*, Corresp. vol. ii. p. 25.]

† [M. Formey, originally of a French family, was born at Berlin in 1711, and died in 1797. Besides the above work, his "Ecclesiastical History," and his "History of Philosophy and Philosophers," were translated into English; the latter by Goldsmith himself, in 1763. See *Life*, ch. xiii.]

Digitized by Google

chair, yet how have we seen the press sweat with the uninteresting anecdotes of men who did nothing! But let them pass. They write for minds congenial to their own.

This may serve as a sufficient intimation that Mr. Formey's taste does not entirely correspond with ours. It must be owned his vanity has given some unfavorable impressions, and his eloquence has wiped none of these impressions away. 'Tis true, that by arraigning his gravity or his learning, we incur some danger from the resentment of our brother journalists, and that class of men who are prudently for ever in the right. A theologist, a German, a professor, a journalist, a secretary to an academy, who perhaps could class eight or ten letters to the end of his name; to arraign the talents of such a man; to say, that with all his eloquence he is at best *metaphorically dull*, will perhaps be considered as heresy in the commonwealth of letters!

Yet let not his faults be confounded with those of his translator; for these are frequently almost too gross for conception. This gentleman talks of "awakening to a vigilancy," in the first paragraph; tells us of the "coction of the ventricles," by which we suppose is meant, in the original, the digestive faculty of the stomach: he translates the exit of the nerves from the medulla spinalis, by the "roots of the marrow." Whenever an English word does not come to his hand, he without further ceremony makes one of his own, such as somnolence, humectating, acrity, acridity, inflammative, machinal, and so forth; all which are delivered with great ease, and much appearance of learning. In short, our German frequently is made to talk unintelligibly, and is thus robbed of one half his reputation; and at best, heaven knows, he has not much to spare! It reminds us of a man, who, selling his horse, assured the buyer that he had but two faults; one was, that he was very hard to be caught, and the other fault

Digitized by Google

—ay, what was that?—he was good for nothing when he had caught him.

The first treatise is entitled, an Essay on Sleep. He raises a controversy whether sleep, which gives rest to our voluntary actions and motions, does not augment the vital and involuntary? This dispute he is at great pains to determine; and Seneca and Boerhaave on one side, are marshalled against Gorter, Keil, and Dodart on the other. An acquaintance with modern discoveries in physiology would have prevented his doubts, and taught him to reconcile Keil with Boerhaave. The quantity of matter which goes off by perspiration, though it be sometimes greater, is frequently less than that which is absorbed from the circumambient atmosphere. Thus a man, who, after the fatigue and exercise of the day, weighs himself upon going to bed, will be found some pounds heavier the next morning. While we are awake and in action, we perspire more than we inhale. In that state, therefore, the blood is deprived of a greater quantity of its fluid than in a state of sleep; the more the blood is deprived of this fluid, the more its stimulus increases. By this means the pulse becomes quicker, and all the vital motions are accelerated. To replenish this waste of fluid, sleep therefore is requisite, which gives the blood a proper degree of fluidity, and regulates the machine.

He next proceeds to consider what it is that sleeps in us. And to this he peremptorily answers, that the cerebrum, which he regards as the source of all our voluntary motions, is at rest; while the cerebellum, by him supposed to be the source of vital motion, continues alive and active. His theory has been so often refuted already, that we must accuse either his candor or learning, in not perceiving the proper objections. Animals deprived of the cerebrum have been seen to perform many of the voluntary motions; a proof that it cannot be the source of such. But to

Digitized by Google

dismiss this essay, let it be sufficient to observe, that whenever the author attempts physiological explanations, he discovers no great share of knowledge or erudition.

His next essay is upon dreams, where his merit as a metaphysician is somewhat superior to his skill in physiology. In quality of the latter, however, he begins this dissertation with a confused account of the manner in which bodies operate upon the nerves; one time considering them as having a nervous fluid, and another, as being elastic springs, that vibrate to every external impression. However, it is sufficient for his purpose that they serve as conveyances from external objects to the thinking powers. The nerves, at their origination from the brain, are supposed to be of much more vivid perception than they are at their extremities, which lie at such a distance from the common sensory. "Hence," continues he, "it is that arise all the acts of imagination during vigilancy; and nothing is more known, than that in persons of a certain habit of body, or who are given up to intense meditation, or agitated by violent passions, these acts of imagination are equivalent to sensation, and even hinder its effects; though otherwise the impression in itself be very far from faint. Those are the dreams of waking men, and there is a perfect analogy betwixt them and the dreams in sleep; both the one and the other depending on that series of inward concussions at the extremity of the nerves, which terminate in the brain; the whole difference is, that whilst awake, we can check this series, break the concatenation, alter the direction, and supersede it, by calling in real sensation; whereas dreams are independent of our will, and it is without the verge of our power either to continue an agreeable illusion, or disperse a hideous phantom. The imagination in a waking person is a policed republic, where the voice of the magistrate appeases confusion and restores order; the imagination in dreams is the same

Digitized by Google

republic in a state of anarchy; and still the passions make frequent attempts against the legislator's authority, even whilst his prerogative is in its full force, and he is in a capacity of asserting his rights."

Our author is of opinion, that there is no period of sleep in which we do not dream, but the images are so confused and faint, as to leave not the least trace upon the memory. So that, properly speaking, the dream is no more than to have a recollection of our dreams. This is a controversy that has employed many to very little purpose. For if, with Mr. Locke, there be a time when the soul is quite insensible, it can never remember such a time, that interval of insensibility being considered as nothing in its period of existence, and consequently will not admit of reasoning about it.

The succeeding essays turn upon the value and neglect of the laws of conversation in the scale of beings; by which he means, that infinite gradation of beings, from the summit of perfection down to inanimate matter. On the order of nature. On the analogy between the nourishment of the soul and that of the body. On the principles of happiness and unhappiness in marriage. On moral liberty. On lending money at interest. The obligation of procuring ourselves the conveniences of life considered as a moral duty. The *nugis addere pondus* is very manifest in this author's manner. Every subject is treated very scientifically, with a great show of argument, which proves nothing; he seems ever upon the wing, yet does not stir an inch. He very conscientiously and methodically divides his subject, surveys it round and round, and then leaves it without stripping off a single obscurity. Need it be added then, upon the whole, that it is one of those performances which generally serve to gain an author the praise of his acquaintance, and yet create no envy in cotemporary writers? The ill-natured must own there

Digitized by Google

is no harm in it, and they who are more generous may, perhaps allow that it reads *well enough.*

VII.—VAN EGMONT'S TRAVELS INTO ASIA.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*Travels through part of Europe, Asia Minor, the Islands of the Archipelago, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Mount Sinai, &c. By the Honorable Ægidius Van Egmont, Envoy Extraordinary from the United Provinces to the Court of Naples; and John Hayman, Professor of the Oriental Languages in the University of Leyden Translated from the Low Dutch.*" *2 vols.* 8*vo.*]

Travels acquire one great part of their merit from being new. Every country seems like the picture in a camera-obscura, continually altering their tints, though the outlines be still the same. A single age introduces new customs and manners, as well as inhabitants. Those who compare the accounts of the travellers of the fourteenth century with those of the moderns, will perceive that even Asia has altered its modes, the inhabitants of many places having almost changed their nature. From every new publication of travels, therefore, the reader has a right to expect recent information, that it at least excels all other accounts by giving, if not more authentic, at least more modern descriptions. In this respect, however, the purchaser of the book in question will find himself mistaken. These travels have been performed more than an age ago; and we have had several men of better abilities, who have visited and described those countries mentioned in the title-page, later than they. To what purpose, then, a new publication, which contains accounts neither so accurate or so modern as those which have preceded it? Really we know not, unless vainly to add to the number of such descriptions, already too voluminous.

Digitized by Google

One who sits down to read the accounts of modern travellers into Asia, will be apt to fancy that they all travelled in the same track. Their curiosity seems repressed either by fear or indolence, and all are contented if they venture as far as others went before them. Thus, the same cities, towns, ruins and rivers, are again described, to a disgusting repetition. Thus a man shall go a hundred miles to admire a mountain, only because it was spoken of in Scripture; yet what informatien can be received from hearing, that Ægidius Van Egmont went up such a hill, only in order to come down again? Could we see a man set out upon this journey, not with an intent to consider rocks and rivers, but the manners and mechanic inventions, and the imperfect learning of the inhabitants, resolved to penetrate into countries as yet little known, and eager to pry into all their secrets, with a heart not terrified at trifling dangers;—if there could be found a man who could unite thus true courage with sound learning, from such a character we might expect much information. Even though all he should bring home was only the manner of dying red in the Turkish manner, his labors would be more beneficial to society, than if he had collected all the mutilated inscriptions and idle shells on the coast of the Levant.*

* [These travels relate to a favorite project of Goldsmith himself; namely, that of penetrating into parts of Asia and bringing back the knowledge of such useful arts as are familiar to its natives, though unknown in Europe. This design occupied his mind for several years, looking forward to some favorable period for its accomplishment, which never occurred, or offered only when it was inexpedient to be pursued. A paper containing the substance, and nearly the words of the above passage, was printed by him in the Public Ledger, and introduced into the Citizen of the World. See vol. ii. p. 147. This project acquired, in the following year, new strength by the accession of Lord Bute to office. A memorial was therefore drawn up by the Poet, pointing out the advantages of a traveller proceeding thither for purposes of utility alone, and an impression prevailed among his acquaintance, that the Princess-dowager of Wales had read and approved of it; but no favorable result ensued.—Mr. Langton was accustomed to mention, in allusion to this scheme,

Digitized by Google

With respect to the gentlemen in view, we have no reason to doubt of their veracity: however, that circumstance alone will not compensate for dry accounts, and observations frequently true, but seldom striking. In copying the Greek inscriptions, they seem frequently to have mistaken the letters, unless this defect is to be attributed to an error of the press.

that Goldsmith had long a visionary project that, some time or other, when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo in order to acquire a knowledge, as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked of in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, "Of all men Goldsmith is the most unfit to go out upon such an inquiry; for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement." In this sally there was more of sarcasm than of truth. The ambition of Goldsmith to profit by what he could find new in the East, could scarcely be deemed very absurd, when a contemplated scheme by Johnson to see the same country with more limited purposes, was viewed with complacency by himself, and applause by his friends. "At the time when his pension was granted to him," observes Mr. Langton, "he said, with noble literary ambition —'Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabic as Pocock did.'" Of merely mechanical arts, Goldsmith's knowledge probably was not great, neither perhaps so contemptibly small as represented; for the term embraces a wide range of objects. Having long revolved the project, he was not likely to be wholly unprepared for what he knew and stated to be a laborious task, and diligent attendance upon the London Society devoted to such pursuits, implied at least a taste for, if not acquaintance with, some of the objects contemplated in the journey. It is more than probable that his design had reference chiefly to certain processes in the arts connected in some degree with chemistry, a science with which he possessed considerable acquaintance. Thus, in the paper quoted on the occasion of his memorial to Lord Bute, he expressly mentions the extraction of spirit from milk, an improved mode of dying scarlet, and the refining of lead into a purer and more valuable metal, as matters for inquiry; an explanation which removes from his project that air of absurdity cast upon it by Johnson.—See LIFE, ch. x.

Digitized by Google

VIII.—GUICCIARDINI'S HISTORY OF ITALY.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*The History of Italy, written in Italian by Francesco Guicciardini, a nobleman of Florence. Translated into English by the Chevalier Austin Parke Goddard, Knight of the Military Order of St. Stephen. In* 10 *vols.* 8*vo.*"]

NOTHING can be more just than the character given of Guicciardini by Lipsius, "Inter nostros summus est historicus; inter veteres mediocris:" if compared to modern historians, he will be found superior; if with the ancients, he must be contented with a subordinate situation. It is indeed a little extraordinary why the ancients, particularly the Roman historians, should still remain the uncontested and unrivalled masters of historical excellence. Their experience then was much more confined than ours, since, to their wisdom we can add that of an intervening space of almost two thousand years. The politics of their princes was not so confined, as the law of nations was scarcely attended to: and war, which with us is little more than a treaty written in blood, was with them the removing of empires, and the enslaving of millions: still, however, with such limited experience, and in countries governed by such rude masters, Sallust and Tacitus wrote their histories, and left their successors models which they may endeavor to imitate; but if their future efforts be not attended with better success, cannot hope to rival.

That, since the revival of learning the Italians have excelled the rest of Europe in history, is a fact so well known, that it hardly deserves to be insisted upon. Barely to mention the names of Machiavelli, Davila, Nani, Muratori, and several others, will serve to silence opposition: the fact is notorious; the reason of their peculiar excellence is not equally so.

Italy is divided into a number of petty states, whose mutual

Digitized by Google

security lies in their mutual jealousy and distrusts. Here then politicians are formed, and states governed in miniature; here a man may, and often has, exerted all the stratagems of war at the head of two hundred men, and exhausted all the chicanery of politics in the government of a petty corporation. This was the soil for an historian; here, as in a map, he perceived the excellence and the inconveniences of every species of polity; could point out, with precision, the ineffective attempts of democracy, or the headlong efforts of mistaken monarchy; this was a field for historical speculation; even he that ran might, if he pleased, be a reader.

In this country Guicciardini was bred, and at the time when its petty states might properly be said to be fermenting into form. He had all the advantages that could conduce to a thorough knowledge, both of the facts he relates, aad the personages who were concerned in conducting them. He was at once (what seldom happens to be united in the same person) a scholar, a soldier, and a politician; and employed by his country at different times in all these three capacities, with advantage to it, and with honor to himself. His narrative is manly and grave, and his facts are made, as in a well-written play, to rise from each other. His impartiality appears manifest: even his own country, to which he owed so many obligations, is treated with historical justice, and its enemies treated with so much candor, that the reader can hardly say whether the author was of Florence or Pisa.

These are a part of his excellences; but it must not be concealed what critics have objected against him on the other hand. He is taxed with being tedious and particular; that he now and then indulges reflection, and retards the events which, in history, should be ever hastening towards the catastrophe. "As for that part of his history," says Montaigne, "which he seems to be

Digitized by Google

most proud of, I mean his digressions and discourses, it must be owned, that some of them have peculiar merit, and are adorned with eloquence and nature; but still he seems in love with them: for, desirous of omitting nothing, and his subject supplying him with more than sufficient manner, he becomes feeble by delay, and his history at length savors of pedantic trifling" Dr. Donne, when talking of the Creation, as delivered by Moses, objects the same faults to our author: "If the history of the beginning of the world," says he, "were written by so prolix an author as Guicciardini, not even the world itself would be able to contain the books written upon its own creation." Yet, notwithstanding the objections of so great men, his history can seem tedious to none but the indolent; and in this class, perhaps, we may rank the two great men now quoted, at least the former confesses himself to be so. There is, through the whole work, especially the first five books, a preparation of incidents, that, instead of being prolix, the reader can scarce lay down the book without an ardent desire of knowing what follows next; and the worst that can be said of his speeches is, that they are fine political harangues improperly placed.

There is an objection of another nature, which carries more weight, because it unfortunately happens to be true; namely, his representing all the actions of his personages as arising from bad motives. "E fu anche sempre inclinato," says a countryman of his, "à le peggiori, come apare nella sua spessa maledicenza di ciascheduno; la quale appresso alla vulgare malignità gli lià guadagnata estimazion di veridico." He was ever leaning to the worst side of a character, as appears by his giving nobody a good word, merely to appear in the eyes of the vulgar as a speaker of truth. Even the most enthusiastic admirer of Guicciardini must allow that this observation is just, since, in the representation of so many characters, he scarce describes one

Digitized by Google

whose conscience is his motive to action. The persons who figure in his drama are almost all knaves or fools, politic betrayers, or blustering idiots. In short, the history before us may be styled a truly misanthropical performance. To a person inclined to hate the species, what ample matter will it not afford, both for ridicule and for reproach!

We see the history open with the account of a monarch immersed in pleasures, surrounded with flatterers, not only ignorant of the polite arts, but hardly acquainted with the figures of the letters, incapable of discovering merit, or what is as bad, incapable of directing it to its proper sphere. We see such a monarch —for so he represents Charles the Eighth of France—resolved to play the conqueror, and plunder kingdoms. Observe how pointed the ridicule is; imagine this man, with a body as deformed as his intellects were contemptible, of a very short stature, bandy-legged, of a puny constitution and detestable visage, equipped like a hero, clothed in complete steel, mounted upon a mettlesome courser, marching into every town at the head of his army, looking fiercely, with his lance on his thigh, and calling upon the obsequious crowd for homage. To make the picture still more poignant, imagine such a figure in love, and acting the gallant! who can forbear smiling at an account like this, unless his mouth be repressed by considering, that the affairs of his fellow-creatures were subjected to the caprice of such a diminutive idiot?

On the other hand, the Italians, whom he came to conquer, are drawn in circumstances even of greater debasement; they meet this army of France without head or conductor, with neither vigor, prudence, nor unanimity; they leave an easy conquest, without striking a blow in defence of their privileges. Yet, let not the reader imagine they were all this time unemployed; they were busily taken up with plots, treaties, politics, and poison.

Digitized by Google

They were too rich or too cowardly, to be soldiers themselves; their armies were therefore composed of mercenaries, who being a mixture of peasants, people in low life, subjects of different potentates, and entirely dependent on their captains, with whom they agreed for a salary, and in whose power it was to detain or dismiss them, they had neither natural nor acquired parts to act gallantly. "The captains were very seldom the subjects of the prince they served, but had a different interest, and separate views; were full of piques and jealousies; their services not commonly limited to a certain time; and being entirely masters of their own companies, they seldom kept the number they were paid for complete." Such is the description of the Italian soldiery. No wonder, then, the country fell an easy prey to the first invader; for we may be assured, that that army will seldom fight well, which has nothing to lose by a defeat."

Yet, notwithstanding the noted cowardice of such troops, they pretended to more personal bravery than those of any other nation beside. Their condottieri, as an historian contemporary with Guicciardini relates, were a set of the most assuming fellows alive. One called himself Cut-head, another Bloody-bones, a third assumed some other frightful appellation; and yet these fellows would often refuse to be led up to a practicable breach, though guarded only by a few peasants, as timorous as themselves. But let us do them justice; for single combat they were lions, every one of them: cowards in the army, and duellists in peace. Guicciardini relates a combat between thirteen of these Italians and as many Frenchmen, who, as mentioned before, had overrun Italy without opposition. The reader may take the combat in the words of the translator, which will at once serve as a specimen of his language, and the misplaced abilities of the Italian soldiery.

"Upon the neck of these unluckly accidents" (some advan

Digitized by Google

tages gained by the Spaniards over the French) "happened another, which mightily checked the forwardness of the French, who had no cause to lay the blame on the malignity of fortune, since the event must be accounted the pure effect of true valor and resolution. The matter of fact was this: a French trumpeter that was sent to Barletta, to treat about the ransom of some soldiers taken at Rubos, heard some Italian men-at-arms speak in terms reflecting on his countrymen. Of this he made a report at his return to the camp, which occasioned an answer to the Italians, and both parties were so heated as to kindle a general resentment, which had no way to vent itself; till it was at length agreed that, for the honor of their respective nations, thirteen French men-at-arms should enter the lists with as many Italians, in an open secure place, and combat till the victory was decided.

"Accordingly, there was a plain space of ground appointed, between Barletta, Andria, and Quadrata, to which the champions were conducted by a set number of their comrades; and, for further security against ambuscades, each of the generals, with the greater part of his army, accompanied them half-way, animating them, and charging them that, as men selected from the whole army, they should be sure to answer, both in heart and hand, the expectations conceived of them, which ran so high, that in their hands, and in their valor, the honor of such noble nations was, by common consent, intrusted. The French viceroy animated his men, by reminding them, that those they saw before them were the very same Italians who had trembled at the name of the French, and had always taken care to get out of their way, without giving them an opportunity of exercising their valor. How often had they traversed their country, from the Alps to the utmost part of Italy; that their adversaries had not acquired new spirits or vigor, nor were inspired with a fresh generosity of soul; but being in the pay of the Spaniards, and under their

Digitized by Google

command, they had not the power to contradict the will of their master, who were accustomed not to encounter their enemies with plain valor and open force, but circumvent them by wiles and stratagems, and now intended to be idle spectators of the dangers of others; but, as soon as these Italians shall be brought into the field, and confronted with the arms and fierce looks of those who have always beaten them, their usual fright will return, and either they will have no heart to fight at all, or else will fight under such fear as to make them an easy prey; the lofty speeches and vain bravadoes of the Spaniards being but a poor foundation for raising the spirits, and a very frail buckler against pointed steel, and the fury of the conqueror.

"On the other side, Gonsalvo was heartening and stimulating his Italians with equally pungent motives. He recalled to their mind the ancient glory of their nation, and the honors acquired by their arms, which had rendered them masters of the world. It was, said he, in the power of those few brave men, who were not inferior in valor to their ancestors, to make it appear to all the world, that Italy, the conqueress of all nations, had, for a few years past, been overrun by foreign armies for no other reason but the imprudence of its princes, who, prompted by ambition, first fell out among themselves, and then called in foreigners, to enable them to get the better of one another. The French, he told them, had never obtained a victory in Italy by true valor, but under the conduct, or by the arms of the Italians themselves; or by the fury of their artillery, the dread of which, as an instrument of war unknown in Italy, and not the fear of their arms, opened them a passage into the country. But now they had an opportunity given them of fighting with sword and lance, body to body, where each of them had liberty to display his own personal valor, and be a glorious spectacle to the chief of Christian nations; and before so great a number of noble persons

Digitized by Google

of their own country, all of them, as well of one side as the other, were extremely desirous that they should get the victory. That they should remember that they were trained under the most famous captains of Italy, continually exercised in arms; and that there was not a single person of their number but had given proofs of his valor in various places, and much to his honor. For them, therefore, it was reserved, either by coming off conquerors to retrieve the honor of the Italian nation, and render its name glorious and formidable, as it had been, not only in the days of their ancestors but even in their own times; or else, if victory was not in the power of such hands as theirs, that there could be no room to hope for better times, but that Italy must for ever remain in a state of perpetual and ignominious servitude. The other officers and private soldiers of both armies were no less solicitous in stimulating their champions, and kindling their courage, charging them to show their bravery, and to behave like themselves, and worthy of the confidence reposed in them, for augmenting, by their own proper valor, the glory and splendor of their nations.

"Thus charged and animated, the champions were conducted into the field, each one full of ardor and in high spirits, where both parties were enclosed within a list, opposite to each other The signal being given, they ran furiously at each other with their lances, in which encounter, none seeming to have the advantage, they laid their hands to their other weapons with great force and animosity, each one exerting himself in so extraordinary a manner, as to beget in all the spectators a tacit confession, that no soldiers more valiant, nor more worthy to act so glorious a part, could have been selected out of both armies. But when they had combated a good while, and the ground was covered with pieces of armor, and blood that issued out of the wounds given on both sides, and the event was as yet uncertain, all the

Digitized by Google

beholders keeping profound silence, and being almost under as much anxiety and concern of mind as the combatants themselves it happened that Guglielmo Albimonte, one of the Italians, was thrown from his horse by a Frenchman, who ran fiercely upon him with his horse to dispatch him; but Francesco Salamone running to assist his companion, fetched a full blow at the Frenchman, who, being intent on the slaughter of Albimonte, was not on his guard, which struck him dead on the spot. After this he and Albimonte, who had recovered himself, with Miale, who had been also wounded and dismounted, fell upon sticking the enemy's horses with long swords, which they had provided for that purpose, and killed several of them; by which means the Frenchmen began to have the worst of the combat, and at last some of the Italians took one, some another of them, till they were all made prisoners.

"The victors were received with joyful acclamations by their comrades, and treated by Gonsalvo, who met them half way, with all the expressions of gladness and respect, congratulating each man in particular, and all in general, as restorers of the Italian honor. They afterwards made their entry into Barletta in a triumphant manner with their prisoners, amidst the sound of drums and trumpets, and the noise of cannon, and accompanied with military shouts and huzzas.—How small (to use the words of our author in another place) is the praise of cutting a figure in tournaments with a heavy lance! and how greatly does it differ from bravery, or from conduct!"

With respect to the present translation, as the gentleman has made an apology for his style in the beginning, we shall not take upon us the invidious task of selecting its faults. Be it sufficient to say, it is better done than could reasonably be expected from a person, a great part of whose life was spent in a foreign country. The grand duke of Tuscany, Cosmo the Third, had

Digitized by Google

invited him to Italy, when but a boy, and there he resided for eighteen years. We could wish to encourage every attempt like this, which serves to make Italian learning better known in England, where it is more generally admired than understood.

IX.—MONTESQUIEU'S MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*Miscellaneous Pieces of M. de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu*," 8*vo*.]

Such of our readers as are not in possession of the last splendid French edition of the celebrated Montesquieu, will find this volume a valuable supplement to his other works, as the translation is executed with spirit, though seemingly inaccurate. There is a pleasure arising from the perusal of the very bagatelles of men renowned for their knowledge and genius; and we receive with veneration those pieces after they are dead, which would lessen them in our esteem while living. Sensible that we shall enjoy them no more, we treasure up, as precious relics, every saying and word that has escaped them; but their writings of every kind we deem inestimable. With what eagerness would all the literati of Europe pore over a half-defaced fragment of Plato, Cicero, Homer, or Virgil! Even a trifling poem of Swift or Pope will make a whole edition of their works sell with rapidity, and we now would purchase a warranted original copy of the worst verses Milton ever wrote, at ten times the price which the original copy of Paradise Lost brought him.

We love to pursue genius from its serious occupations to its lighter and more airy amusements, and to peruse their unformed sentiments, as well as their finished pieces. Seeing their thoughts rise without order, connection, or art, and destitute of the embel-

Digitized by Google

lishments of style, and ornaments of learning, is examining them more closely, entering more intimately into their acquaintances, and more strongly marking their original powers. In the one they address us with the formal and distant air of the superior; in the other, with the ease and familiarity of the friend, where every thing is uttered as it occurs. Studying the outlines of any work of genius, is like watching the progress of infancy to maturity; we trace it growing under the hands of the artist; we imagine ourselves present at every addition and improvment, and congratulate ourselves as if we had been assisting to its final perfection. Where it is broken off unfurnished, we lament it as a promising child cut off in the bloom of youth, to the disappointment of all our hopes and wishes.

Cicero observes, that we behold with transport and enthusiasm the little barren spot, or ruins of a house, in which a person celebrated for his wisdom, his valor, or his learning, lived. When he coasted along the shore of Greece, all the heroes, statesmen, orators, philosophers, and poets of those famed republics, rose in his memory, and were present to his sight: how much more would he have been delighted with any of their posthumous works, however inferior to what he had before seen! In just this manner did we receive pleasure from the volume before us. The detached pieces with which we are here presented fall greatly short of the merit of all his other performances; yet still they have the spirit of Montesquieu. His defence of the "Spirit of Laws" is close, cool, and judicious; sometimes rising to wit, often shrewdly sarcastic; but generally dry, barren, and of such a kind as indicates that the talents of this great man did not lie in controversy. This perhaps may be the reason why this elegant panegyrist, D'Alembert, has so slightly touched upon this piece. As to the "Temple of Gnidus," we must beg leave to dissent in opinion from that polite encomiast, who, we think, has extolled it

Digitized by Google

greatly beyond its merits, and probably from that sympathetic veneration which men of genius ever feel for each other. In our mind, it proves little more than that Montesquieu, to his other great talents, annexed those of fancy and invention.

X.—MODERN NOVELS.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*Jemima and Louisa; in which is contained several remarkable Incidents relating to Two Ladies of distinguished Families and Fortunes. In a series of Letters, by a Lady.*" 12*mo.*]

THE female muse, it must be owned, has of late been tolerably fruitful. Novels written by ladies, poems, morality, essays, and letters, all written by ladies, show that this beautiful sex are resolved to be, one way or other, the joyful mothers of children. Happy it is, that the same conveyance which brings an heir to a family, shall at the same time produce a book to mend his manners, or to teach him to make love, when ripe for the occasion. Yet, let not the ladies carry off all the glory of the late productions ascribed to them: it is plain by the style, and a nameless somewhat in the manner, that pretty fellows, coffee-critics, and dirty-shirted dunces, have sometimes a share in the achievement. We have detected so many of these impostors already, that for the future it is resolved to look upon every publication that shall be ascribed to a lady, as the work of one of this amphibious fraternity. Thus, by wholesome severity, many a fair creature may be prevented from writing, that cannot spell; and many a blockhead may be deterred from commencing author, that never thought. The plan of the work is as follows:

Two misses, just taken home from the boarding-school, are *prodigious* great friends, and so they tell each other their secrets

Digitized by Google

by way of letter. It cannot be expected, and truly it would be out of nature, to suppose persons so young, and so very pretty, capable of writing proper English; so they transgress in this particular almost in every sentence, *you was*, and *they is*, being frequent expressions between them. In the first letter, Miss Jemima Courtly, or Mima, for shortness sake, lets her old and intimate friend know that her mother died when she was eight years old; that she had one brother and one sister; with several other secrets of this kind, all delivered in the confidence of friendship.

In the progress of this correspondence we find she has been taken home for carrying on an intrigue with Horatio, a gentleman of the neighborhood, and by means of her sister's insinuations, for she happens to be her enemy, confined to her chamber, her father at the same time making an express prohibition against her writing love-letters for the future. This command Miss Mima breaks, and of consequence is turned out of doors; so up she gets behind a servant without a pillion, and is set down at Mrs. Weller's house, the mother of her friend Miss Fanny. Here then we shall leave or rather forget her; only observing that she is happily married, as we are told in a few words towards the conclusion.

We are next served up with the history of Miss Louisa Blyden, a story no way connected with the former. Louisa is going to be married to Mr. Evanion; the nuptials, however, are interrupted by the death of Louisa's father, and at last broke off by means of a sharper, who pretends to be Miss's uncle, and takes her concerns under his direction. What need we tell *as how* the young *lovier* runs mad, Miss is spirited away into France; she at last returns; the sharper and his accomplices hang or drown themselves, her lover dies, and she—oh tragical! keeps her chamber! However, to console us for this calamity, there are two or three other very good matches struck up; a

Digitized by Google

great deal of money, a great deal of beauty, a world of love, and days and nights as happy as heart could desire; the old butt-end of a modern romance.

XI.—HAWKINS'S MISCELLANIES.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1759. "*Miscellanies; by William Hawkins, M. A., Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.** *In three Volumes.* 8vo.]

In this publication Mr. Hawkins appears under the character of a divine, a critic, and a poet; and in his triple capacity we shall beg leave to consider him.

His first tract in divinity is entitled, "a Rational Enquiry into the Speculative and Practical Principles of the Christian Religion." A performance not without merit; but the author certainly might have done more, or at least better, had he attempted to do less. In a small tract like this, it was impossible to exhaust the whole subject of divinity, as he has endeavored to do: it was impossible, in so short a compass, to silence the atheist, the deist of every denomination, the Arian, the Roman Catholic, and all the various sects and opinions among ourselves, which either idleness or ignorance has produced; it was a vain attempt, we say, to confine, in his scanty page, opinions that have already exhausted tomes of undecided controversy. In showing how far reason, unassisted by revelation, can lead us into the nature of Deity and ourselves, he has perhaps given our rational faculties greater sagacity than they merit, as he thinks

* [Son of the author of the "Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown." On the resignation of the poetry professorship by Dr. Lowth, he succeeded him in 1751. He was rector of Little Casterton, in Rutlandshire; and at the time of his death, in 1801, vicar of Whitchurch, Dorsetshire.]

Digitized by Google

that reason alone points out the immortality of the soul. His words are, "If man is a being compounded of body and spirit, which we have endeavored to prove, there is in his nature a principle of existence. A mortal spirit is a contradiction in terms; for the essential difference between body and spirit is, that the latter is not subject to corruption. Without attributing this native principle of incorruption to spirit (if I may so say), we cannot prove the eternity of God, which is asserted by all who admit his existence; for God is not a corporeal being; he therefore exists as a spirit to and from all eternity." Thus he hangs the proof of the eternity of the Godhead, *à parte post*, to speak with the schools, upon the same feeble support that he does that of the soul of man; and yet the one is capable of the strongest demonstration, while the other has scarce the shadow of reason to support it, and is obliged to fly to revelation to silence inquiry. The eternity of the Godhead, *à parte post*, is proved thus: no being can lose its existence but by an act of power superior to its own; but no being has a power superior to the Godhead: therefore he must be eternal. On the contrary, the soul of man may survive the body a thousand years; but what argument can be drawn from reason, that divine power may not then annihilate it? This difficulty ever stuck with the philosophers, nor did their reasoning ever proceed further than to prove the soul a more vivacious principle than the body. The reasoning of Plato on this head was excessively weak; and yet, perhaps, it was all that reason could do. 'We see,' says he, 'different parts of the body, after death, have different duration; the sinews last longer than the flesh; the bones still longer, and so forth; why then shall not the soul be of greater duration than either? Thus spake unassisted reason; but revelation has brought our doubts into certainty, and surely it is taking from the latter to ascribe to reason what is not its due. Were our

Digitized by Google

author's arguments enforced against deists or atheists only, we should heartily join issue; but he has chalked out a narrow path for faith to walk by, and sometimes declaims with heat, we had almost said virulence, against many opinions amongst Christians which are purely theoretical, mere speculations, which should serve as playthings to exercise the indolence of theology, rather than as brands to excite its rancor or reproach.

His next tract is, a review of a book entitled "A free and candid Examination of the Principles advanced in the Bishop of London's* Sermons, and in his Discourses on Prophecy; wherein the commonly received system, concerning the nature of the Jewish and Christian Dispensations is particularly considered," &c. The Burgosean controversy has not more divided our speculative divines, than the late broached dispute, whether the Jews had any notion of a future state, is likely to do. The Bishop of London, in his Sermons, assumes the affirmative: but he has had many opponents; and now the argument seems kindled up, nor perhaps will be extinguished, till some opinion more new rises, or revives, for awhile to attract the attention. Mr. Hawkins seems to be pretty confident in the advantages of his cause; and this we may venture to say, that he seems to be on the safe side, for he is on the Bishop's; and though he loses his cause, he may gain a vicarage. As for the controversy, so much has been said on both sides, that we must really acknowledge ourselves skeptics in the debate. It is probable, that the Jews were well acquainted with the doctrine of the soul's surviving after death, from its being a received opinion in Egypt, and in several nations round them. But how far this doctrine may be contained in the Old Testament, is what perhaps will never be determined, unacquainted as we are at this period with

* [Dr. Thomas Sherlock.]

Digitized by Google

the strict meaning of the language in which it is written.* The whole dispute must turn on the import of some Hebrew words; and who is there now alive capable of being a judge in such a controversy? We can know enough, and believe enough, without being acquainted with a syllable of the matter: we could wish our divines would therefore turn their arms against the common enemy; and while infidelity is at the gate, not waste the time at civil altercation.

The second volume contains Poetical Prelections, pronounced in the natural philosophy school, in the university of Oxford, of which seminary Mr. Hawkins was a member, and constituted professor of poetry there. His design and method in this course of lectures are thus explained by himself:

"De ratione vero, quâ in sequentibus prælectionibus usurus sum, quæ præfanda censui, quam paucissimis accipite. Ea igitur, &c."—"The method which I shall pursue in the following course of lectures, is briefly as follows. All I have had to say upon dramatic poetry, I have rather treated in a series of critical dissertations than reduced to a system, partly because I chose to deviate from the barren track, and partly because I know that

* ["Lord Byron having stated, in his preface to "Cain," that there was no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament, the British Reviewers observed:—"There are numerous passages dispersed throughout the Old Testament, which import something more 'than an allusion to a future state.' In truth, the Old Testament abounds in phrases which imply the immortality of the soul, and which would be insignificant and hardly intelligible, but upon that supposition. 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it."—*Eccl.* xii. 7. 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame: and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'—*Dan.* x. 2. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth: and though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'"—*Job.* xix. 25.]

Digitized by Google

those who are fond of poetry, are seldom fond of having things treated with a philosophical dryness. One general rule is sufficient to regulate all poetry—a rule borrowed from nature, of which the poet is always an imitator: *let there be nothing monstrous.* If we strictly attend to this, it will be quite unnecessary to perplex you and myself with technical terms, and critical minutia; a subject which can neither inform the learner, nor please those who are acquainted with poetry. I am not ignorant that the drama is confined by the strictest laws; but I hope soon to be able to show, that we not only may sometimes infringe upon those laws, but that we even ought to do it, if we would ease the reader, and adhere to nature strictly. To be entirely explicit, those who follow the letter of the law must be often guilty of injustice, and sometimes commit faults more unnatural and unreasonable than those from which they profess to deter us.

"I am in the mean time perfectly sensible how invidious a task it must be to impugn doctrines established by time, and by Aristotle; a name which critics of a lesser order implicitly admire, a man whose orders they are ever ready to obey. They, however, who teach others are not to refute, but determine, and ever to have the maxim of Horace in their eye:

'Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.'

"It is not the authority of any precept we are to esteem, but the reasons on which it is established. The authority of Aristotle, I will allow, justly stands in the highest among us of Oxford, yet it would be absurd to pay it upon all occasions an implicit obedience. There is no reason why he who is justly accused with error in other sciences, should be our only guide in poetry. However, if any should accuse me of audaciousness or arrogance, that resting upon my own authority alone, of which no man has a meaner opinion, I impugn the doctrines of critics of

Digitized by Google

established reputation, let them know that vanity has been by no means my motive. I desire no fame for being the parent of new opinions; I only aim at defending our great countryman Shakspeare, and to show that what have been imputed to him as faults, are often the result of art and invention."

This pretty well serves to give a general idea of Mr. Hawkins's design; which he has treated with some learning, though but little conviction. The rules of the drama were not invented by Aristotle, but the Greek tragedians: those rules they adopted, because nature and the rules were the same; and in this whole performance we cannot see an objection to them, but that of Shakspeare, and other English writers wrote well without being acquainted with them.

But let us hasten to his third volume, where, stript of his gown, and descended from the chair of Aristarchus, Mr. Hawkins endeavors to put his own precepts into practice, and enters the lists of fame, divested of these adventitious ornaments, sometimes the reward of genius, but not unfrequently found the badges of stupidity.

The first performance here is called "The Thimble;" an heroic-comical poem in five cantos, illustrated with notes critical and explanatory by Scriblerus Secundus. There is nothing in the whole province of writing more difficult to attain than humor: the poet in other subjects walks a broad road, but here he seems to tread along a line, and the slightest deviation undoes him. Humor once missed, most effectually turns the author ridiculous; all the satire he would fondly level at others, is now pointed against himself; and as the tyrant of a tragedy, he is obliged to swallow the poison prepared for another. A disappointed humorist is indeed a most deplorable figure; somewhat like blockheads of vivacity in company, ever grinning without a jest. The whole plot of these five cantos is no more than a

Digitized by Google

young lady happening to prick her finger with a needle. The gods and goddesses were resolved to make a thimble to prevent such disasters for the future. Vulcan accordingly made one, and Venus gave it to the lady's lover, and he brought it to his mistress, and so they were resolved to be married. This is a plot of genuine antique simplicity: however, it is illustrated with a match of shuttlecock and blind-man's buff, by way of episode.

The next is "Henry and Rosamond," a tragedy which Mr. Garrick refused, because it was more like a poem than a play. Shakspeare, our author's favorite, seems principally imitated; the antiquated turn of his diction being sometimes erroneously preserved.

Then follows "The Siege of Aleppo," a tragedy refused at both houses, like the former. This is, by many degrees, the best of Mr. Hawkins's productions, and is a work that really deserves applause; and it will be saying not much, not indeed enough, in its favor to aver, that several worse pieces have been of late accepted by the managers, and exhibited with success. To quote from it would be to injure the author, since its greatest merit lies in the opposition of character, the variety of the distress, and the unexpected catastrophe. As in the former play, so here, he seems to have Shakspeare ever in his eye.* There

* [BOSWELL. "It is very easy for you, Mr. Garrick, to talk to an author as you talked to Elphinston; you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays of poor authors. You are an old judge, who has often pronounced sentence of death. You are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation, are not very fond of seeing the operator again." GARRICK. "Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr. Hawkins) who wrote a tragedy, the *Siege* of something, which I refused." HARRIS "So, the siege was raised!" JOHNSON. "Ay, he came to me and complained; and told me that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play!—(Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed; for Johnson told me he believed the story was true.

Digitized by Google

are many works more of our author in this publication, in all which we find something to praise. Be it enough to say in general, that Mr. Hawkins was not born a poet, or that imitation has spoiled him.

[*From the Critical Review*, 1760. "*A Review of the Works of the Rev. W. Hawkins, late Professor of Poetry in the Univerity of Oxford: And of the Remarks made on the same in the Critical Review for August, and in the Monthly Review for September*, 1759. *In a Letter to the Author of both Reviews.*]

THE present Review of the works of Mr. Hawkins is supposed to be written by a friend; but when we come to examine the performance, this friend appears pretty plainly to be no other than Mr. Hawkins himself. It seems his works, in three volumes, had passed in review before us, in our critical capacity, some months ago, and we thought them but *indifferent;* paraded it a second time before the profound authors of the Monthly Review, and they thought them *indifferent;* they solicited the public attention in the usual methods of publication, and if we may judge by the success, there also they were thought but *indifferent;* so many witnesses in one story would probably have

GARRICK. "I—I—I said, *first* concoction." JOHNSON (smiling). "Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him *in false English:* he could show it under his hand." GARRICK. "He wrote to me in violent wrath, for having refused his play: 'Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible affair. I am resolved to publish my play. I will appeal to the world; and how will your judgment appear?' I answered, 'Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrors, I have no objection to your publishing your play; and, as you live at a great distance (Devonshire, I believe), if you will send it to me I will convey it to the press.' I never heard more of it; ha! ha! ha!"—*Boswell's Johnson*, vol. vii. p. 94.—It appears from the Garrick Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 6, that Garrick really wrote *first* concoction.]

Digitized by Google

convinced any reasonable being of his own mediocrity. Mr. Hawkins, however, was not to be convinced; he has undertaken to review his own writings; has published a comment that almost nobody will read, upon writings that almost nobody has read; has surveyed himself on all sides, and thinks himself on every side invulnerable. "O te, Bolane, cerebri felicem fecerunt Divi?"

A man who reviews his own works is indeed a curiosity, and the reader is undoubtedly impatient to hear in what manner he treats himself. Our reviewer, therefore, sets off with informing us, that "he is apt to believe the candid and judicious reader will acknowledge his style, whether Latin or English, in verse or in prose, to be pure, easy, fluent, manly, and eloquent. It is sometimes, perhaps, too voluble and diffusive; but, I think, seldom so as to be perplexed and unintelligible. In short, I presume, in this respect, Mr. Hawkin's Miscellanies are fit to be upon the same shelves with the works of the most celebrated modern writers, either in our own or the Latin tongue. It will be but justice to our author to add, that he sufficiently sustains the compound character both of a verse and prose writer; the merits of each are as distinct as may be; nor does the one seem to be a whit the worse for the other." The reader now sees the great difference between us and this gentleman: he is for putting his own works upon the same shelf with Milton and Shakspeare, and we are for allowing him an inferior situation; he would have the same reader that commends Addison's delicacy, to talk with raptures of the purity of Hawkins; and he who praises the Rape of the Lock, to speak with equal feelings of that richest of all poems, Mr. Hawkins's "Thimble."

But we, alas! cannot speak of Mr. Hawkins with the same unrestrained share of panegyric that he speaks of himself; and though we despise the crowd upon other occasions, yet we must

Digitized by Google

join them in this instance, and leave this gentleman to his self-applauding singularity. We allowed him, indeed, some small share of merit in our former article; and this is most certain, that whatever he may say of our partiality, or our malevolence, the manner in which his works were treated then, betrayed neither; but bore a greater share of indulgence than our duty to the public should, in strict justice, have permitted. In whatever pieces we were good-natured enough to make no objections, this gentleman has imagined we had nothing to object: we passed over the merits of his style in silence, and he has thought proper to regard this as a symptom of malevolence, which was in reality the strongest instance of our moderation.

After he has sufficiently *bedunced* us through several pages, he at last has the tenderness to answer to our particular objections, and that with sufficient perplexity. In this dispute, he at least has the advantage of being as tedious as he thinks proper; because he seems no way solicitous about trespassing on the reader's patience. We must, on the other hand, study conciseness, because we write in order to be read.

The first material objection which he endeavors to answer, is that made to his endeavoring to prove by reason alone, the immortality of the soul. We thought, at the time we objected, and still think, that we are obliged to revelation alone for any evidence in this matter; and that those philosophers, who were guided only by reason, vainly endeavored to prove that immortality which it is our duty to believe. Plato, who is said to have dogmatized more on this than any other subject (as we before observed), brought but very superficial arguments to prove a truth of so great importance to society; we instanced one; namely, that of the different duration of the different parts of the body, and thought this the most plausible argument he makes use of. Mr. Hawkins is of a different opinion; but unfortunately does not

Digitized by Google

give any reasons, nor any quotations from Plato, to prove his sentiments, but says any schoolboy may do it. Almost all Plato's reasoning upon this subject depends upon two *data*, that of the soul's pre-existing before the body, and that of abstract existences, which he calls ideas; which commentators have pretended to explain a hundred different ways: if we grant him either of these, it is certain his proofs are sufficiently cogent; but it is hoped no Christian divine will grant him the first; and the latter, what is it but begging the question?

But Mr. Hawkins thinks it not only apparent from reason, but as demonstrable as the immortality of God himself; and yet brings no proof of the immortality of God, but that of spirit not being subject to corruption. Whether spirit is subject to corruption or no, is the whole question in debate; and surely it cannot be called an argument, roundly to assert that it is or it is not; and yet such an argument is all that Mr. Hawkins has thought proper to use. We offered a better; namely, the omnipotence of the Godhead; and if he does not think proper to make use of it, that is his fault, not ours.

Our self-reviewer goes on to praise himself where we thought him only tolerable; to quote from himself where he thinks it will redound to his reputation; a man is, indeed, hard put to it for praise, and must have but indifferent neighbors, who is thus obliged to commend himself. But why has Mr. Hawkins taken so much pains to accuse us of envy and malevolence? Was it his fame as a writer that we wanted to remove, in order make way for our own? That could hardly have been the case with respect to the author of tragedies, that were all either damned or refused, or poems that were entirely forgotten! We might have pitied him indeed, but we surely could not envy. Perhaps our motive to malevolence might have been, that Mr. Hawkins stood between us and a good living: we can solemnly assure him

Digitized by Google

we are quite contented with our present situation in the church, are quite happy in a wife and *forty pounds a year*, nor have the least ambition for pluralities. The truth is, Mr. Hawkins, like every disappointed author, was angry, and knew none but us to wreak his vengeance upon: he somewhat resembles the sergeant in the comedy, who, whenever insulted by his superior officers, went home to beat his wife.

END OF VOLUME III.

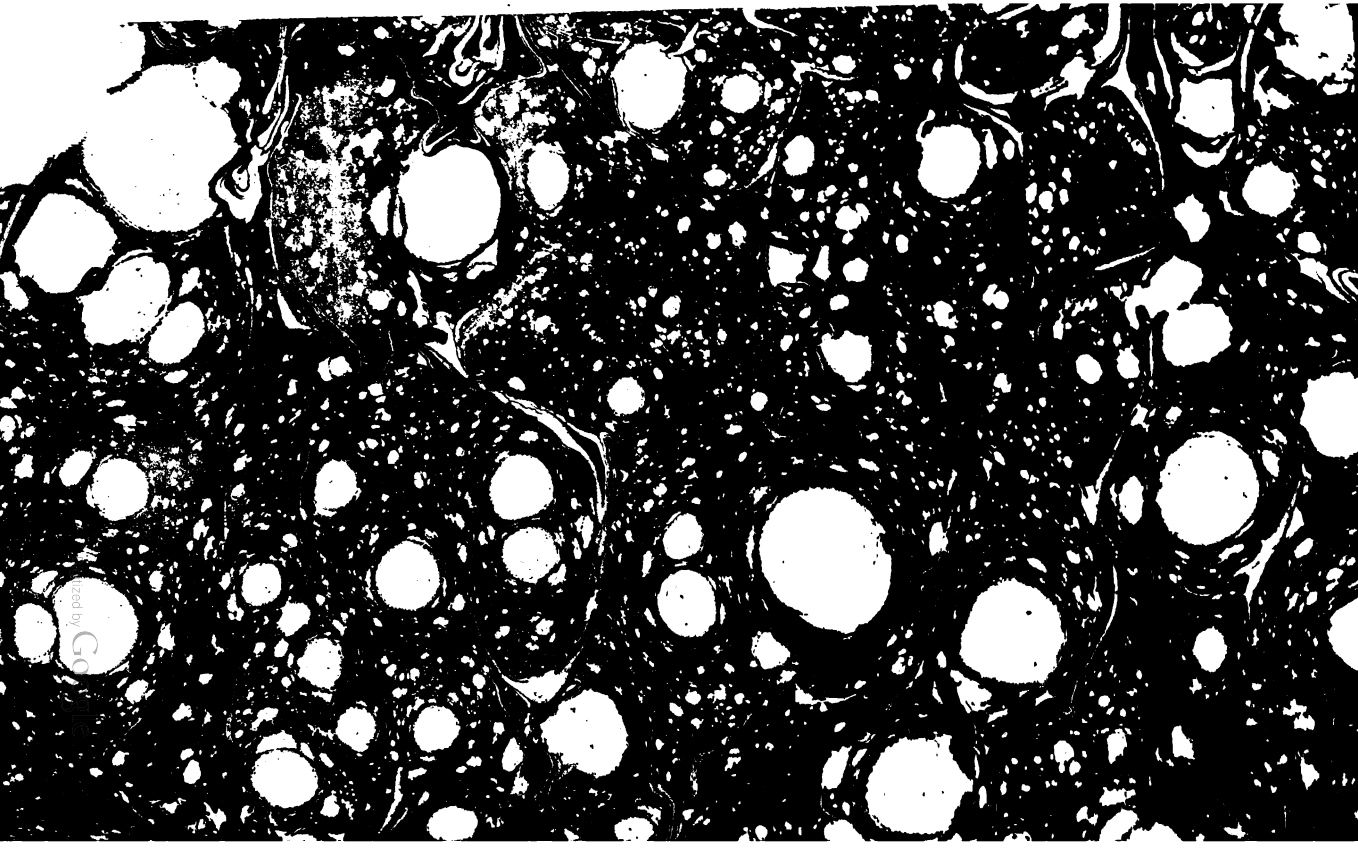
Digitized by Google

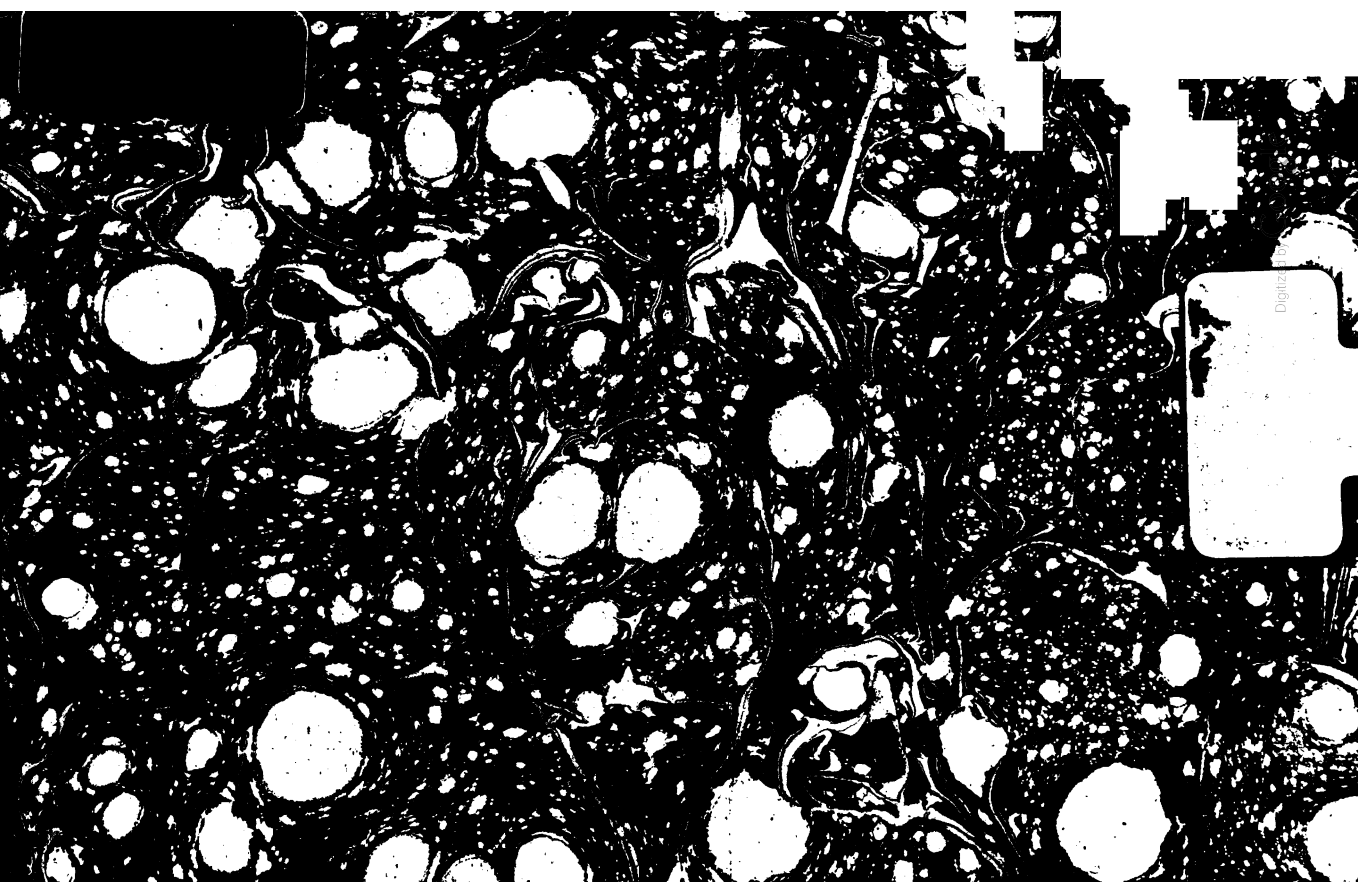
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

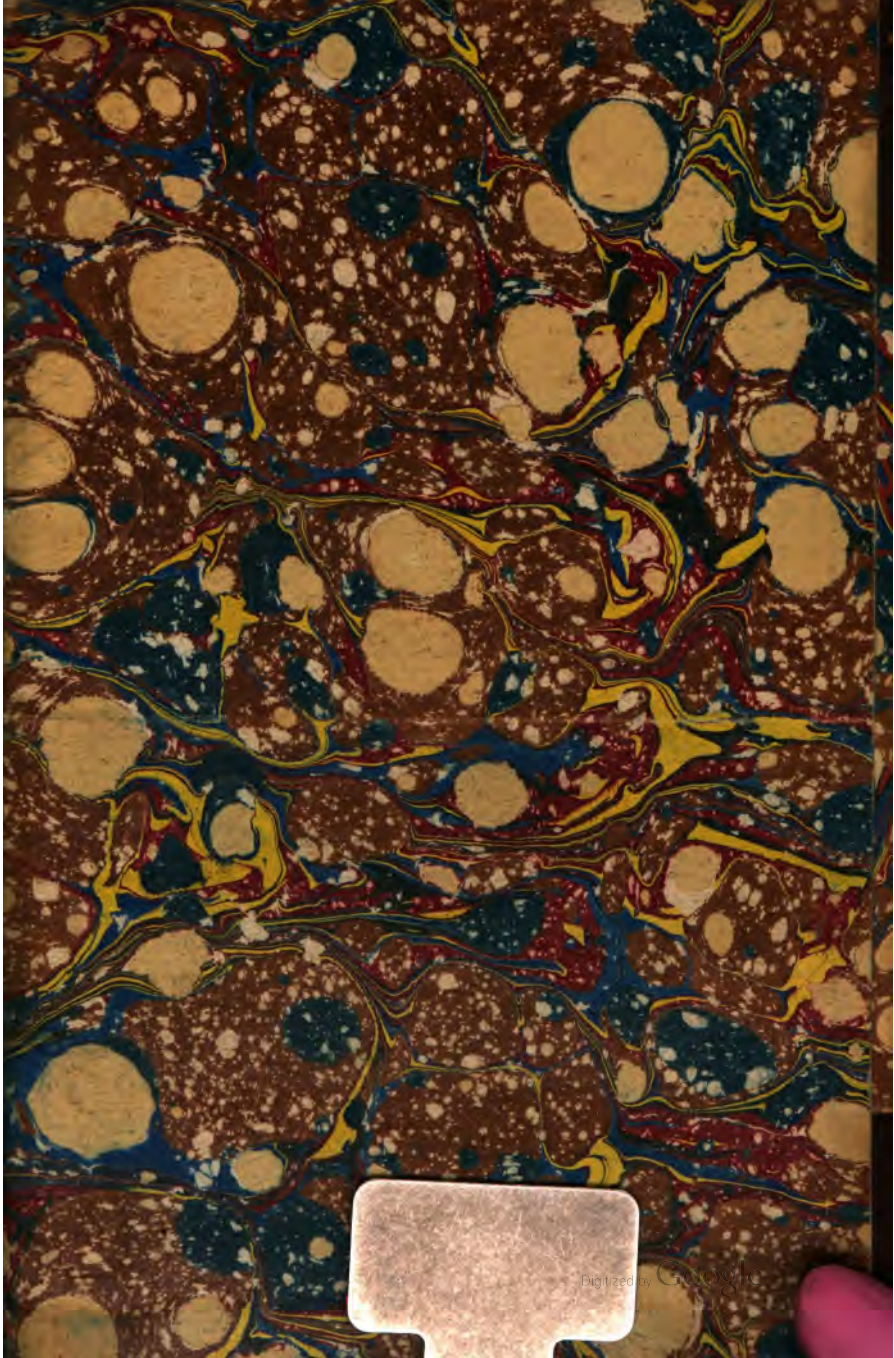
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google





Digitized by Google


Digitized by Google